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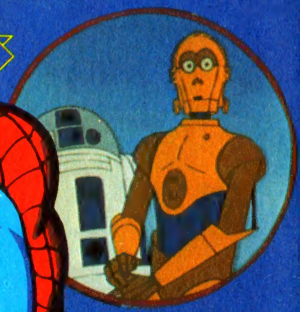

THE ANIMATED STAR WARS

WHAT'S NEW IN

SUPERHERO GAMES

RON GOULART ON

THE BATMAN

HERO HISTORY OF

GREEN LANTERN

PLUS THE LATEST NEWS, COLLECTING TIPS AND A COMPLETE CHECKLIST OF UPCOMING COMICS!

0 71896 48432 01

EEYOW!!
IT WORKED! MY ARMS ALMOST CAME OFF, BUT THIS IS DEFINITELY THE FASTEST WAY TO GET WHERE I'M GOING!
I THINK I'M GOING TO NEED AN OCEANFUL OF BEN-GAY LATER.

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EDITORIAL

BY HAL SCHUSTER

I had a fantastic time today! Often, the demands of editing/publishing a number of magazines devoted to movies, comic books, comic strips and animation places me in unpleasant positions at unenjoyable events. This time it was different, and I heartily recommend that you attend the very next event of this kind that you can. There are already a few other programs of this type on the continent, and with any luck at all the number will grow.

By now you should certainly be wondering what the heck I am talking about. The Los Angeles International Animation Celebration just completed a magnificent and much-welcome run and I was a guest of the crew putting it on, loving every minute of it. While not every animated film was a masterpiece, most were interesting and several were among the best I have ever seen. And more important to me, I have never been so surrounded with such a profusion of animated footage and people who absolutely love it!

Feature films included *Starchaser 3-D* and *Alice In Wonderland* from the U.S., *Epic* from Autralia, *Gwen* from France, Canada's famed *Rock and Rule*, traditional tales in animated form from China (*Uproar in Heaven*) and Japan (*Warriors of the Wind*), and Hungary's *The White Mare*. Other, less-publicized features included *The Soldier's Tale* and *Space Firebird*. There were special tributes to Bob Godfrey, Wolfgang "Woolie" Reitherman, Osamu Tezuka and Chuck Jones. Salutes to the fine work emanating from the United Kingdom, Holland, Scandinavia and Czechoslovakia appeared alongside retrospectives on computer animation (perhaps the program I most enjoyed) and animated rock (see—there was something for everyone!). The sheer force of imagination unleashed dominated every minute of the proceedings. Even the entries that I did not enjoy showed an obvious intelligence in their craft.

The people putting on the event were just fantastic and the gentleman who gave me my VIP credentials set the tone for the entire event. He couldn't have been nicer to deal with!

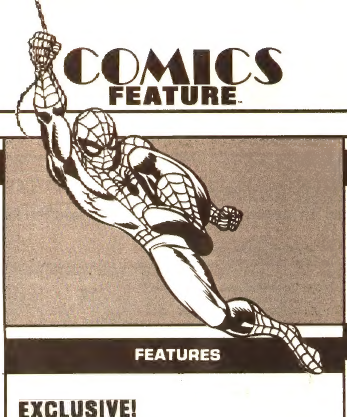
Next issue we will interrupt our coverage of Saturday morning animation programmers to bring you a very special interview from the Celebration. One of the world's greatest fantasists, Ray Bradbury, talks with America's best-known animator Chuck Jones in an unforgettable session. And it'll all be here next issue, thanks to the kindness of both gentlemen and the Los Angeles International Animation Celebration!

This issue is filled with exciting features, with Max Allan Collins rejoining us, Goulart looking at the Golden Age exploits of the Batman, Vah Hise bringing the emerald gladiator Green Lantern up to date, Jacobs and Jones covering one of Marvel Comics' most creative periods, and all of the myriad writers involved with Marvel's flagship superhero Spiderman taking us behind the scenes to view what lies ahead and how they see the ol' Webspinner! Stan Lee, perhaps the greatest idea man in the field, tells us which drawers he looks in for new ideas, Mike Benton offers some useful advice and Steve Perrin provides another glimpse of what lies ahead for gamers. Not too bad an assortment in the opinion of

Happy Hal Schuster

CF

COMICS FEATURE



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EXCLUSIVE!
The Future of
SPIDERMAN!

Spider-Man may be America's favorite comic book hero, appearing every week as well as daily in the newspapers. How do you keep so many tales of our favorite Wall-Crawler straight—and interesting? Spider-Scripters Tom DeFalco, Peter David and David Michelinie explain how Spider can lead three lives!
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THE DARK AVENGER OF THE FORTIES--THE BATMAN!

Ron Goulart looks back at The Batman, in the beginning, when he first prowled the pages of *Detective Comics* and created the foundations for a legend.
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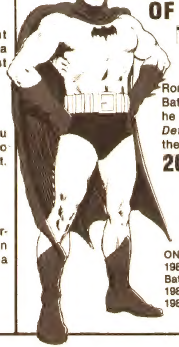

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FEATURE NEWS

LOIS LANE TO INVESTIGATE MISSING CHILDREN
DC Comics Mini-Series Researched and Written by Single Parent.

The real-life tragedy of missing children—estimated at upwards of two million reported cases each year—has received extensive coverage: photos and descriptions plastered on milk cartons and on mass transportation bill boards, television movies addressing the topic, numerous national and local organizations combining efforts to search for victims. DC Comics is joining the campaign to increase awareness of this crucial issue with a four-issue Lois Lane mini-series, written and extensively researched by Mindy Newell, single parent of a young daughter.

"Lois Lane is the perfect character for bringing the whole topic of missing children to the attention of young people—and adults, too," notes Newell. "She's an investigative reporter whose own biological clock is running down. She's both personally and professionally concerned with the risks and responsibilities of bringing up a child in the world today. I can bring my own concerns to her character, being the parent of a school age child myself."

Newell has tapped the resources of numerous agencies in researching the series. In addition to approaching national organizations such as the New Paltz, New York-based Child Find, Inc. and the Fort Lauderdale, Florida-based Adam Walsh Center, she has contacted many groups in her own state of residence: New Jersey. From Senator Bill Bradley and the New Jersey School Board to local television station WOR and the Juvenile Division of the Bayonne Police Force, Newell has discovered firsthand many of the problems inherent in the missing children issue.

"This is an extremely important topic to bring to everyone's attention," points out Vice President-Executive Editor Dick Giordano. "The more people know about abduction—and the more they realize it can happen to teenagers as easily as infants, the better off we all are."

The Lois Lane mini-series will run 4 issues of 32 pages each. Each issue will contain at least two pages devoted to printing photographs and descriptions of missing children and listing phone numbers of appropriate organizations. The series is pencilled and inked by Gray Morrow and edited by Robert Greenberger.

"FIRST OF ALL, THERE ARE MORE THAN TWO MILLION CHILDREN REPORTED MISSING EACH YEAR."
C. LEE LANE
"OF THIS NUMBER, A FIFTH OF THEM ARE LOST OR RUNAWAYS."
"AND THEY YOUNGSTERS OR DO ANY OF THEM GO HOME ON THEIR OWN?"
"SOME DO—OR DO, BUT MOST ARE JUST GONE."
"WHERE'S MOMMY? SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO COME FOR ME."
"MOMMY CAN'T COME RIGHT NOW. I'LL EXPLAIN LATER. BUT SHE WANTED YOU TO STAY WITH ME."
"ABOUT 100,000 ARE KIDNAPPED BY DIVORCED OR SEPARATED PARENTS."
"BUT NOT!"
"THE KIDNAPPER USUALLY TELLS THEIR THE OTHER PARENT IS SICK, OR DEAD."
"I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW ARE PARENTS OF THESE PARENTS MARRIED, DIVORCED, ONE OF THEIR HEALTH AREN'T THEY?"
"THE OLDER ONES, YES...OR THEY KNOW HOW TO CONTACT HOME AND ASK FOR THEMSELVES."
"AND RUNAWAYS—MOTHERS ARE JUST AS GUILTY AS FATHERS IN PARENTAL ABDUCTIONS."
"BUT THE LITTLE ONES, BELOW TEN YEARS, THEY DON'T, OR CAN'T. THEY BECOME THE PAWNS IN A RUTHLESS ADULT'S GAME."

NEWS NOTE:

It is rumored that Western Publishing—the former publisher of Gold Key comics and continuing publisher of myriad children's coloring and activity books—may buy the Cadence Corp. This would make Western the owner of both Marvel Comics and Marvel Productions.

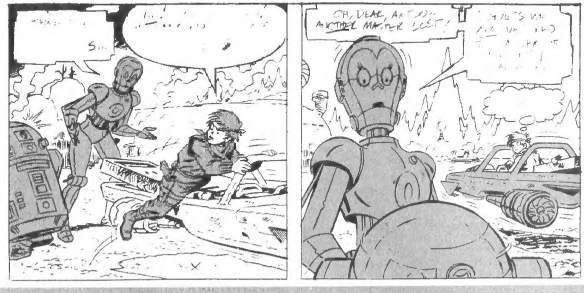
Four New Animated Commercials for G.I. JOE Comic Book

Hey, kids, there'll be more fun with your favorite toy soldiers next year!

Marvel's *G.I. Joe* is on the air again with four new animated television commercials scheduled for nationwide use beginning in February 1986.

G.I. Joe issues 47, 49, 51 and 54 will all be spotlighted in new 30-second animated commercials created by Marvel Productions. These spots will air at varying times depending on the area.

FROM STAR WARS TO STAR COMICS: R2-D2 AND C-3PO TO STAR IN DROIDS.



R2-D2 and C-3PO, the mechanical duo who fought the evil Empire alongside Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia, became a legend in the *Star Wars* trilogy. Now they will join the Star Comics line with their own bi-monthly series, *Droids*, set to debut in January.

Droids also marks the return of one of comics most popular and talented artists. Marvel Art Director John Romita, famed for his work on *Spider-Man, Capt. America* and *The Fantastic Four*, joins writer Dave Manak for his first regular series in years.

Set in the time before Artoo and Threepio met Princess Leia, *Droids* will chronicle their adventures as they journey across the galaxy with a variety of masters. This is the same time period which will be covered in the new *Droids* cartoon series on Saturday morning television.

"While the stories are set in the same period, we won't be adapting the television episodes into comics," Star Editor Sid Jacobson reveals. "Dave (Manak) has a whole series of adventures planned for Artoo and Threepio, so I'm sure he won't need to look elsewhere for story ideas."

Dave Manak is also the writer of the *Ewoks* Star Comics series, illustrated by Warren Kremer. "At some point we might even decide to do a crossover adventure that would involve both titles, but for now each series will follow its own path," Sid notes.

EPIC EXPANDS STAFF—PLANS NEW PROJECTS IN 1986

"Our line of titles have reached the point that we need to look at expanding our staff to make way for the projects we're currently considering," Epic Editor Archie Goodwin notes. "There are a number of exciting things in the works, and we want to make sure we have the personnel to give them the attention they deserve."

Gearing up for a busy year of new projects, Epic Comics has added two new persons to its staff and promoted two persons already working as part of Marvel's high-quality creator-owned division.

Daniel Chichester is Epic's newest Assistant Editor. A native of Connecticut, he is a film major pursuing his Bachelor's degree at New York University. He will work closely with Jo Duffy and Margaret Clark on a wide variety of creative projects.

Eve Freberge, a lifetime New York resident, has also joined the Epic staff as their Editorial Assistant.

Jo Duffy has been promoted to the position of Managing Editor for the entire Epic line. She will continue as Associate Editor for *Dreadstar, Elektra: Assassin, Elfquest, Groo The Wanderer,* the *Marada Graphic Novel* and *Swords Of The Swashbucklers.*

Margaret Clark has also received a promotion, and is now the Associate Editor for *Alien Legion, The Bozz Chronicles, Moonshadow, The One, Six From Sirius* and *Steelgrip Starkey.*

"Now we're ready to start the new year with energy and enthusiasm," Goodwin concludes. "Epic in 1986 is going to have some real surprises in store for anyone who loves comics."

DID ANYONE NOTICE:
When *The Comics Buyer's Guide* ran their recent awards, *Amazing Heroes* took top honors for publication about comics; and when *Amazing Heroes* ran the Kirby Awards, *The Comics Buyer's Guide* won in the same category?

STRIP NEWS

CAN'T YOU JUST SEE BRENDA ON THE BACK SEAT OF A HARLEY-DAVIDSON?
FRASER and SCHMICH
MISS PRIM CLUTCHING THE FAT NECK OF SOME GREASY BIKER?
9-25

NEW WRITER FOR BRENDA STARR

Brenda Starr, the ravishing redheaded reporter and heroine of comic strip pages for more than 40 years, is now being written by Mary Schmich, feature writer for the *Chicago Tribune*. Schmich, 31, took over the strip on Sept. 23.

Ramona Fradon, who has been drawing *Brenda Starr* since 1980, will continue to illustrate it.

The strip (distributed by Tribune Media Services) has attracted a widespread attention on and off the comic pages since its debut in 1940 by Dale Messick. Messick sought to develop a comic strip about a glamorous working woman who traveled and encountered adventurous situations as part of her job. She decided a newspaper reporter would be the ideal character.

Since that time, Brenda has been married twice, had a child (who vanished in a plane crash) and been pursued by sheiks, barons, spies, media moguls and rock stars as she's traveled the world in search of front page news stories.

Today, *Brenda Starr* still contains the same key ingredients of glamour, mystery and romance that have made it one of the most successful strips in comic strip history.

In the new storyline under Schmich, Brenda finds herself going undercover as a "motocycle mama" as part of an assignment for The Flash, the newspaper where she is employed as a reporter. Wearing tight-fitting jeans and a skimpy tank top emblazoned with the name "Sweet Poison," Brenda shakes things up in a gang of bikers called "The Bad Boys."

MARY SCHMICH

ANIMATION NEWS

ROBOTECH: THE MOVIE

Executive producer Frank Agrama claims that "what we have in *Robotech* is an opportunity to do for children's animation what *Star Wars* did for science fiction films. The story is all new and concerns a group of students that uncovers a government plot to manipulate a valuable alien technology for political and military purposes. Against a backdrop of intergalactic action, characters fall in love, solve complex problems and engage in life and death struggles as they discover the wonders of a new technology." *Robotech the Movie: The Untold Story* will bring the popular tv series to the giant screen as an $8 million feature film.

The film is the company's first foray into U.S. theatrical production, although Agrama has been a producer and leading distributor on the international scene.

STAN LEE SOUNDS OFF

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Hi, True Believer. Glad you could make it this month. I've been waiting for you.

Last ish I asked you to write and spell out which subjects you'd like us to tackle in this extremely exciting and titanically thought-provoking new series. Unfortunately, since "magazine time" is different than "real world time," due to our printing schedule, I've got to write this new article before the previous one goes on sale, so I won't be receiving your littin' little letters until this minor masterwork has been concluded. Ergo, you'll have to let me pick the topic just this one more time.

Actually, the subject for this month's excursion into erudition won't be hard to zero in on. It involves a question that I've been asked more often than Arnold Schwarzenegger flexes.

And now that we have you on the edge of your seat, wondering what the next portentious platitude may be—may I have the envelope, please?

The question (are you ready for this?) is. .

"Where do you get your ideas?"

Now don't misunderstand me. I'm not the only one who has had to respond to that impassioned interrogation since time immemorial. I would guess that virtually every novelist, screenwriter, poet, lyricist, comicbook scripter and anyone who has ever written anything at all, is continually bombarded with the ubiquitous query, "Where do you get your ideas?"

Okay. Now that you've suffered through one of the longest introductions on record, the least I can do is try to answer this question which has been plaguing mankind longer than ingrown toenails.

But first, we must establish some ground rules. It must be unversally understood that I positively am not speaking for other writers. I wouldn't dare. I can't tell you where Stephen King gets his ideas, or Walt Simonson, or George Lucas, or Chris Claremont, or Ray Bradbury, or John Byrne, or Harlan Ellison, or Jim Shooter, or Neil Simon, or Roy Thomas, or Isaac Asimov or even Irving Forbush. (If I was getting paid by the word I'd toss in a lot more names, but I suspect you get the idea). The only one I can speak for with any authority is my own adorable self, and sometimes I'm not even sure about me.

However, since the longest journey starts with a single step, and since this threatens to become the most long-winded column ever written, let's get started.

Here then, the long-awaited answer to the most pressing question since "May I leave the room?" My answer to "Where do you get your ideas?" is. . .

"I dunno."

Well, that isn't strictly accurate. I sup-

pose I do know, in an abstract way.

I get my ideas from everything I see or have ever seen, everything I hear or have ever heard, everything I learn or have ever learned, and from everything I do or have ever done!

And, y'know something? I suspect that the same goes for all the other pen-pushers and word-processor tappers I've mentioned above. The same goes for you, too.

Think about it. Aren't all of us the sum total of all our experiences? Whenever you give an opinion about anything, isn't it based on everything you've ever seen or heard?

Now let's try to be more specific.

I'm sitting down to write a story. Obviously, I've got to dream up some characters to people my plot with. I need a hero, but I want him somewhat different than the average hero. Okay, what can I do to make him different? Who do I know, or whom have I known that may have some interesting personality traits?

Hey, what about that character who used to be at the checkout counter in our local supermarket? He was built like a Sherman tank, but was the softest-spoken, gentlest guy you'll ever meet. What if I cook up a hero like him? He'll be big and powerful and everyone's afraid of him—till they learn that he hates to fight. A reluctant hero, loosely based on a guy I had seen a few times in a supermarket. Now I'm off and running.

The point is, nobody dreams up ideas in a vacuum. They must be based on something, and that something has to be a person or an event that you yourself have seen, heard, read about or done. (Don't ask me how you can "do" a person. I just write the words. We'll leave the interpretations to you).

Suppose you wanna write a scary story? Your thought processes might go like this...

I want to come up with a horror story that would scare Dracula into going on a milk diet. Now, where am I going to get some ideas?

If you're a writer like Edgar Allan Poe, you'll try to find the scariest locale you can. The Rue Morgue might do it. If you're a writer like Ray Bradbury, you might find the most commonplace, unexpected site for your horror theme, such as a typical American small town which is visited by a simple carnival.

Remember me saying that ideas result from everything you've seen, done or read? Well, here's an example from my own capricious career.

After inflicting *THE FANTASTIC FOUR* upon an unprepared and totally defenseless reading public, and being lucky enough to have it become a best-selling mag, I figured I might as well go for it a second time. So, I scratched my head, rub-

bed my chin, stared off into space and tried to come up with an idea for a real original, different type of superhero to be a companion mag to the FF.

I must have rejected a thousand different names, half of them ending in "man." I made little thumbnail sketches of all sorts of swashbucklers in all sorts of boots and capes with all sorts of far-out weapons. But everything I cooked up was (I thought) too similar to dozens of other costumed comicbook superguys.

After a while, I started to hark back about all the old movies that had been my favorites. I realized a very strange thing. Many of them didn't have typical "hero" heroes. In fact, one of my all-time favorites was *King Kong*, whose hero was a dumb, ugly, clumsy, rather destructive giant ape, for gosh sakes! And I loved 'im!

That was the start of it. Then I remembered *FRANKENSTEIN*. It wasn't Dr. Frankenstein who was the hero to me. I can hardly remember him now. But the monster, Boris Karloff, he's the one who turned me on! Same with *DRACULA*. Who cares who was hunting him? Who cares who the good guy was? All I remembered, or wanted to remember, was Bela Lugosi, the ol' thirst-quencher himself!

I knew I was on to something. I decided to create a monster, and to make him the hero. But he couldn't just be all bad. There had to be a twist, some reason for the reader to like him, to sympathize with him, to want him to triumph. And that's when something else I remembered from the past came in handy.

That something else was *DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE*. Remember the story? The good doctor can't stop himself from turning into the monstrous Mr. Hyde. It was the gimmick I needed.

The rest is history. If I had never seen Frankenstein or Dracula, and if I had never read Robert Louis Stevenson, there might never have been—*THE HULK*! (I can just hear the dissidents among you murmering, "They never should'a let him see so many movies or read any books!")

One last example and then I'll letcha go.

In my probably manic, never-ending quest for different types of superheroes, I again wanted something that would be totally different than the FF, or ol' Greenskin or any of the other costumed crusaders we had leapfrogging around the planet. You can probably imagine what I was thinking. . .

We've just created the Hulk, who's the strongest creature on Earth. Now how in the name of Aunt Petunia do we top something like that?

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You guessed it. After a while it occured to me that the only way to make something bigger and stronger than the strongest creature on Earth was to create someone who is outside of our little ol' home planet. So, once again I thought back to all the things I had seen and read, and I remembered "Bulfinch's Mythology." I had always loved the legends of the gods, the Roman gods, the Greek gods, the Norse gods—and then I stopped. The Norse gods. Wow!

Everyone knew about the Greek and Roman gods. We all knew Zeus and Jupiter, Venus and Aphrodite, Mars and Ares, but somehow the Norse gods were not as well known. And yet they were probably the most exciting and colorful of all. Zingo! I had another offbeat superhero—*THE MIGHTY THOR!*

I'm sure you get the point. It's only because I used to read the legends of the gods when I was younger, only because I loved them and remembered them that I was able to cull that concept up from my memory when I needed it.

So, to get back to the main question, "Where do you get your ideas," they come from everywhere, from everything a writer has experienced all during his lifetime.

Therefore, my advice to those of you who hope to become the next Jules Verne or Frank Miller, is—get out there and live! Open your eyes, see the world around you, read whatever you can get your hands on, soak up information like a sponge, store all your experience in the memory bank of your mind.

And then, when you need an idea for a story, you'll never quite know from where or how it came, but this I promise you—it'll be there! Now, if Iron Man doesn't elope with one of the Transformers, I'll see you again next issue, same time, same place.

Excelsior!

CF

Stan

BY JAMES VAN HISE

GREEN LANTERN

Continuing our look back at the many battles of the Emerald Warrior, issue 15 features a return engagement with Sinestro, the evil Green Lantern, but number 16 is one of the best issues in the entire series. It not only introduces Star Sapphire but features a story called "Earth's First Green Lantern," which explains the seeming discrepency of Abin Sur. It explains his crashing on Earth in a spaceship and then passing his mantle and ring—which enables one to fly—on to Hal Jordon.

Star Sapphire is really Carol Ferris, who is chosen by an alien race of immortal amazons to be their leader. She looks just like all of their previous queens! But Carol resists the honor. She loves G.L. and doesn't want to leave Earth. Astonished that she would resist merely because of a "man-creature," they temporarily give her the powers. She is compelled against her will to seek out and battle the puny man-creature. When G.L. defeats her, the Zamaron's leave Carol on Earth and remove all memory of her Star Sapphire identity. But this character is too good an idea to be forgotten for long.

Issue 18 features Sinestro yet again. A backup story is drawn by Gil Kane through page six and then Mike Sekowsky for pages 7-12. The inking is

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bland enough to make the whole story appear as if done by one artist at first glance. A second look shows the obvious difference. The inking on most of the G.L. stories drawn by Kane tended to be uninteresting. Kane has a very dynamic style which is thinned down by inking. For awhile with Sid Greene inking, the art looked better, until Greene's inking began employing thicker and heavier lines in the late Sixties.

The Flash returns in issue 20 but the art continued to undermine the writing. The inking on Kane's pencils became more and more bland.

Issue 21 introduces Dr. Polaris, master of magnetism while issue 22 features the return of Hector Hammond.

Issue 23 introduces Xax, the grasshopper-like G.L. He has been seen frequently in recent years in Tales of the Green Lantern Corps.

The Shark appears in issue 24. A shark which evolves into a human as the result of an atomic accident, for some reason when he turns into a man he's wearing a pair of bikini briefs! What a guy.

In "Star Sapphire Unmasks Green Lantern" in issue 26, she does just that. When G.L. unmasks her, she changes back to normal and has no memory of Hal Jordan's secret, or her own secret.

The Shark returns in 28, but issue 29 is where things start getting interesting. Sid Greene took over the inking chores. This is significant because in the Sixties, D.C. had a creative team assigned to each book stuck to a title for years without changing! Talk about job security! Issue 30 is especially good, featuring a dinosaur story and a tale of another alien Green Lantern.

GOLDEN AGE CROSSOVERS

In the mid-Sixties, D.C. popularized the idea of having present incarnations of characters team up with their counterparts from the Golden Age of the Forties. Gardner Fox launched this idea in the classic "Flash of Two Worlds" (*Flash* 123). *Green Lantern* 40 brought back the original G.L. in the "Secret Origin of the Guardians!," a story which introduces ideas now being used in *Crisis On Infinite Earths*. These concepts form the basis for changing the Guardians of the universe in 1985.

This crossover features the origin of the Guardians. The Golden Age G.L. is Alan Scott whose power ring does not affect anything made of wood. Of course, Hal Jordan's ring is powerless over anything which is yellow. His guest appearance was so popular that he reappears in issue 45. This story even features an odd one-panel guest appearance by artist Gil Kane. He addresses the reader about the story being read.

The Green Lantern Corps, whose appearances would become more frequent in the late Seventies, appear in issue 46 in a story which is continued into 47. It is G.L.'s first continued story, something rare in D.C. at this time. (Marvel was starting to make a steady practice of it!)

In issue 49, Hal Jordan learns that Carol Ferris plans to marry someone else. Despondent, he leaves Coast City behind. Issue 50 features two stories, both inked by Gil Kane. The artist demonstrates the power in his pencils often obscured by other inkers. Kane continued inking his pencils and 52 features both Sinestro and another crossover with the Golden Age G.L., Alan Scott.

Sid Greene returned to the inking in issue 58 but the work is very heavy and eyes tend to look exaggerated and distended.

In number 59 we learn about Guy Gardner, "Earth's Other Green Lantern." He is a man who Abin Sur's power ring had selected as someone equally worthy of being a ring-holder. But Hal Jordan was closer and so he got it. It kind of makes you wonder why both men selected by the ring were

white Americans. But that will be dealt with later.

In issue 61, the Alan Scott G.L. guest-stars once more. It is clear that this was a popular team.

In number 62 there is a bizarre fill-in drawn by Jack Sparling. It is inked so heavily by Sid Greene that the casual readers may not even spot the difference. Sparling also did issue 63. With number 64, Mike Sekowsky began drawing the title. Issue 67 has a lead story drawn by Dick Dillin. The backup is drawn by Sid Greene "Tales of the Power Ring" is a precursor to "Tales of the Green Lantern Corps."

Gil Kane returned in issue 68. Issue 69 was especially nice because the Kane art was inked by Wally Wood.

Issue 71 has a backup story drawn by Dick Dillin and inked by Murphy Anderson. It is part of a recurring series of stories about Hal Jordan and his two brothers. In these, his brother Jim is always suspected of being G.L. It is a pretty lame series and this is one of the worst installments. This 1969 story by John Broome features a cliche Hippie who, as was the rule in comics then, was portrayed as a slimy villain.

Issue 74 is Kane inked by Anderson. In the story, although Carol Ferris is no longer getting married, she rejects G.L. when he tries to make her face the reality of her unknown Star Saphire identity.

Number 75 is a very average issue and gives no hint of the changes in store for the series.

A RELEVANT DIRECTION

While comics often try new directions, changes in costumes, powers or sidekicks, stories normally remain essentially the same.

With Number 76 the title became *Green Lantern—Green Arrow* and the scripts by Denny O'Neil with art by Neal Adams is not only a new direction for the title, but a radical innovation in comics.

Now, no comic undergoes such sweeping changes unless its sales are so anemic that the choices are either drastic change or cancellation. What O'Neil and Adams did (and Neal Adams contributed to the scripts, even to rewriting O'Neil) was bring a self-conscious sense of relevance to the series. The stories questioned whether G.L. was overlooking the real social ills on Earth. Tales deal with prejudice, racism, overpopulation, politics and even drug abuse. In retrospect, they often seem overly obvious. And yet, they were an honest attempt to make a statement. Since comics rarely treaded into issues of emotional divisiveness, reaction to these books tend to be extreme. There is also the obvious "I read comics for escape" arguments. And the fear that all

STRIP SEARCH

MAX ALLAN COLLINS

A TALK WITH RAY GOTTO

This issue's installment of *Strip Search* is a follow-up to the Ray Gotto/OZARK IKE piece that appeared in *COMICS FEATURE* #29. For those of you who came in late, let me explain that Ray Gotto's OZARK IKE was a popular comic strip in the late '40s and early '50s, combining the hillbilly action of LI'L ABNER with the sports action of JOE PALOOKA (albeit OZARK IS a baseball player, not a boxer). Gotto is perhaps most famous for his gorgeous, outrageously busty "gals," making him one of the prime proponents of so-called "cheesecake" art in the comic strips.

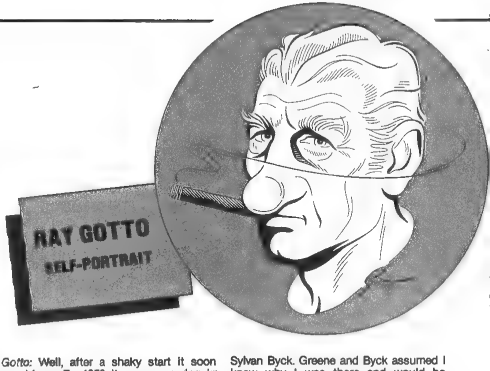
Ray also has a distinguished career as a sports cartoonist, primarily for *The Sporting News*, no less.

About ten years ago, I had the pleasure of working with him, briefly, on a failed syndicated strip project called HEAVEN AND HELLER. The story behind that almost-was strip is told in the previous *COMICS FEATURE* Gotto piece, *Ms. Tree* #8 (available as a back issue from Eclipse Enterprises and various dealers) contains the previously unpublished Gotto samples for the strip, as well as my story synopsis.

From HEAVEN AND HELLER came my first (and modestly award-winning novel *True Detective* (1983), which has thus far spawned two sequels, *True Crime* (1984) and *The Million Dollar Wound* (forthcoming, 1988). It should also be noted that HEAVEN AND HELLER—widely circulated around the comics world while then-Marvel editor Rick Marschall was acting as the strip's agent—was the first '30s private-eye comics feature.

During the period I was working with Ray on the strip, I coaxed this rather shy and very talented man into sharing some of his memories about OZARK IKE and the comic strip world. What follows, then, is a conversation with OZARK IKE'S pops.

ON YO' WAY, HOSSHIDE !
POGGONE! HE'S DONE IT AGAIN!
OZARK IKE
CUBS
CATS
RARIN' TO GO, OZARK IKE STEPS UP TO HOME PLATE AND BELTS OUT A 4-BAGGER... EAGER TO CHALLENGE ALL RIVALS FOR THE TITLE OF...
"HOME-RUN KING!"



Collins: Ray, why don't we start with *Ozark Ike* . . . did the strip come out of an interest in sports? I know you're from the South originally . . . had you come in contact with some real hillbillies?

Gotto: Since I was a kid in Nashville, sports have been my primary interest. After playing baseball and football in high school . . . Dinah Shore, then named Fannie Rose Shore, was one of our cheerleaders . . . and with no formal art training, I drew some sports cartoons of Southern League ballplayers, and was surprised when the Nashville Banner bought them in 1936. Soon I was a staff artist with the newspaper, drawing occasional editorial and sports cartoons, but mainly advertising art, photo layouts and retouching. During the period I came up with the idea for *Ozark Ike*, although I knew absolutely nothing about hillbilly life. As you've pointed out, correctly, the strip was primarily about sports.

Collins: The idea for *Ozark* came along much earlier than actual syndication, then.

Gotto: Well, the war came along and I found myself in a Navy uniform, stationed in Washington with animators and artists turning out documentary and training films (and at night further developing the strip idea). In the fall of 1945, while still awaiting discharge from the service, I went to New York with six weeks of finished strips, and contacted an agent (Stephen Slesinger) who handled *Red Ryder* and *King of the Royal Mounted*, plus some Zane Grey rights. He sent the material over to King Features, where at first it was rejected. But that same day, Damon Runyon happened to spot it on an editor's desk. At the time he had less than a year to live, having already had his vocal cords removed because of cancer. However, he scribbled a note indicating his approval, which led to the strip's acceptance.

Collins: *Ozark* hit the papers soon after that, right?

Gotto: The starting date was November of '45. The strips already drawn were of Ozark reporting to spring training . . . so while still in the Navy, I had to hurriedly write and draw several months of hillbilly material that would lead into baseball.

Collins: Was it popular from the very beginning?

Gotto: Well, after a shaky start it soon caught on. By 1953 it was appearing in about 250 papers, many of them in foreign countries. The Sunday page was launched a couple of years after the daily started. Except for the early ones, I didn't draw them. I merely wrote them, with an indication of what action should occur in each panel, and artists living in New York illustrated them. During this period I was living in Daytona Beach, Florida.

Collins: Did you do the Sports Whodunit pages? (the Sunday pages that were the first to appear, running late 1947—early '48. These were single continuity pages in which Ozark and Dinah re-enacted some famous sports event, leaving the reader to guess whodunit, with the answer appearing the next week, or upside down at the bottom of the page.)

Gotto: Yes, about 25 whodunits were done before switching to a different format.

Collins: Why the format change at all? The whodunit format was very clever. The reprint comic books of *Ozark* always printed a whodunit or two, and I assumed they ran for years.

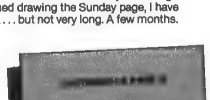
Gotto: Here I go again, boring you with hazy details of the past . . .

Collins: No, not at all.

Gotto: About mid-summer of '47 I got an urgent call, in Florida, from Slesinger saying to fly to New York. In his Park Avenue office I was told that King Features wanted to see me. So I walked the four blocks to King Features Syndicate on 45th Street and was immediately ushered into Ward Greene's office by Sylvan Byck. Greene and Byck assumed I knew why I was there and would be prepared with ideas. But nobody had bothered to tell me that the decision had been made to hastily launch a Sunday page. It seems that the Philadelphia papers were engaged in a circulation war, and the Bulletin was promoting the hell out of *Ozark Ike*. I knew nothing of this, so I sat there, dumb as hell, while they kicked around ideas. Eventually we decided on the whodunit format. Then, about six months later, I received word from Byck to switch to a more conventional format. No reason was given. I would guess that the sales department thought it would be more marketable in a different form.

Collins: That's where Sagebrush Sal comes in.

Gotto: Right. Since King Features' policy was to run separate continuities for the daily and Sunday, a new character was needed . . . like Sweeny, who Roy Crane used in the Sunday *Buz Sawyer* pages. So I came up with Sagebrush Sal, who never appeared in the dailies. Exactly how long I continued drawing the Sunday page, I have no idea . . . but not very long. A few months.



SILVER AGE

MARVEL PHASE II

BY WILL JACOBS AND GERARD JONES

After the severe sales downturns in 1969 and early 1970, Marvel picked itself off the mat quickly with a pair of new titles. These were *Amazing Adventures* and *Astonishing Tales*, anthology comics showcasing new strips, and they set the pattern that would dominate Marvel at the dawn of the new decade. Lee and his company were clearly determined to attack poor sales with new experimentation. Unlike DC, which was looking to relevance and realism as the one key to revamping its line, Marvel would toy with a tremendous variety of genres and styles. Sales were still shaky, but thanks in part to an association with a new distributor, the company felt optimistic enough to launch a spate of titles. These were modelled on DC's *Showcase*, designed to give new ideas a chance to prove themselves before moving out on their own. During 1972, these would be joined by a number of new series in titles of their own, which led Stan Lee to proclaim what he called Phase II of the Marvel Age of Comics. "Hang loose, heroes," he wrote, "and watch our smoke! Marvel's set to bust loose now, and that means the wonderous world of fantasy won't ever be the same!" For the first time since 1968, it was truly exciting to be a Marvelite.

Ironically, although most of the series featured co-creations of Lee himself, the advent of Phase II marked the effective end of his creative control of Marvel Comics. In 1971, when Martin Goodman moved on to other publishing concerns, Lee took over as Publisher. Giving up writing at the same time, he poured his attention into creating a line of full-sized magazines and, later, into gaining a foothold into the Saturday morning tv market. Roy Thomas, his right-hand man, now became the Editor and driving force at Marvel. Under him, a slew of new writers would dominate the company. Following Thomas' style and example, and often working with him, came the prolific young Gerry Conway. Ex-fans Gary Friedrich, Tony Isabella and Mike Friedrich were assigned to the minor strips. From DC would soon come their compatriots, Len Wein and Marv Wolfman. Most significantly, however, the change marked the arrival of a trio of influential young innovators: Steve Englehart, Don McGregor and Steve Gerber.

THE PERIOD IS MARKED BY EXPERIMENTATION

Steve Englehart, the first upon the scene, specialized in playing games with established Marvel characters. His first chance to shine came when the Beast, the most articulate and agile member of the defunct X-Men, took over *Amazing Adventures* with Issue 11 (March 1972). The first story, written by Gerry Conway and drawn in a spooky, wild style by Tom Sutton, told how the hero, Hank McCoy, inadvertently used a chemical to transform himself into a true beast-man, with savage canines, thick fur and a pithecanthropine visage. In the process he abandoned his charming old speech-style in favor of a more common, angry, agonized one. Englehart took over the writing with the next issue and began weaving some complex subplots around a variety of characters, including the X-Men, munitions-maker Tony Stark (who is secretly Iron Man), some foreign spies and—most surprisingly—two stars of Marvel's defunct romance comics line, Patsy Walker and her boyfriend Buzz Baxter, now slipped unheralded into the world of superheroes. The Beast's series ended after seven issues, but by then Englehart had demonstrated a potential that would soon, on *Captain America* and *The Avengers*, become a bright spot in the Marvel firmament.

the next of the trio was editorial assistant Don McGregor, who was unexpectedly handed the writing chores on the new *Black Panther* series, about the superhero king of a technological wonderland in the African jungle (*Jungle Action* 6, Sept. 1973). Setting about the task with remarkable energy and serious intent, he designed a fascinating geography and socio-economic history for the kingdom of Wakanda. He created a dominant political situation: While the Black Panther lived out his infatuation with the Western world by joining the Avengers, his people began to feel he had abandoned them and a brutal chieftain—Erik Killmonger—laid claim to the throne. McGregor wrote his first thirteen issues as a single story, "Panther's Rage," in which the rightful king battled a long series of Killmonger's bizarre, sadistic

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lieutenants—with such names as Venom, Malice, Baron Macabre, Lord Karnal, Salamander K'ruel—and took a personal, inward journey to learn his own true values and desires. The Panther became a strong, complex character, forced to choose between the foreign lands that fascinated him—here represented by an urbane Afro-American lover—and the land to which he felt an inherited duty.

To portray the Panther's journey, McGregor dropped all pretense of writing for children and instead delivered the most difficult and ambitious prose yet employed in comics. Mixing a style more florid and rococco than Roy Thomas' with large doses of popular psychology and philosophy, he filled pages with detailed discussions of values and self-perceptions. Contrasting himself with one of his supporters, the Panther ends a long exposition with : "I'm afraid much of Killmonger's revolution has caused me to lose a great deal of my empathy. But Taku, he still listens, senses, evaluates. Inside he is simultaneously outraged by the savagery of men, yet, most often, I think he is merely bemused by their purposes and intrigues." (*JA* 16, July, 1975). Although some of the writing was eloquent in isolation, it stood in ludicrous contrast to the world of superheroes, and rarely felt like natural speech for the characters. The approval McGregor's writing won from many fans, however, suggested that plotting and smooth-flowing narrative were becoming less important to them than exploration of the heroes' lives. Indeed, characterization was quickly becoming the sole concern of some series.

Black Panther was kicked off by the flashy art of Rich Buckler, but it really took flight with the arrival of Billy Graham, whose startling angles, lush organic backdrops and lithe, sweaty figures gave the jungle both poisonous menace and erotic allure. His tight, sinewy rendition of anatomy could convey more of the strength and anger of the Panther than could dozens of McGregor's ponderous words.

The third of the innovators first made his mark on *The Defenders*, the most successful creation of Marvel's expansion. Premiering in one of the new showcase-titles, *Marvel Feature* (Dec. 1971), it concerned a secretive team of superheroes composed of assorted loners and oddballs: The Hulk, Dr. Strange and the Sub-Mariner (who was soon to leave), later joined by an ex-villain named Nighthawk and a human woman with the soul of an Asgardian imposed over her own, the Valkyrie. That such a group could join into a team seemed unlikely even for Marvel, and, indeed, writers Thomas, Englehart and Wein often had to stretch the plots to make them work. But with the arrival of neophyte writer Steve Gerber in 1974, the unlikely and implausible became the very fabric of the stories themselves.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Games

BY STEVE PERRIN

WHAT IS A GOOD SUPERHERO GAME? PART II

Three columns ago I embarked on an attempt to describe just what I thought made up a good superhero role playing game. A deluge of new products kept me from pursuing the subject until now.

However, the review bag is light this time around, so we can resume the search for the ideal superhero game. In the first episode I dealt with character creation. Now we'll take a look at powers usage and combat rules.

USING THE POWERS

Super-powered characters in the comics seem to have very little trouble using their powers. The Human Torch is irradiated with cosmic rays and can immediately fly wherever he wants. Spiderman, formerly bookish Peter Parker, jumps from building to building with the greatest of ease (though swinging from flagpoles takes a little extra work). Ronnie Raymond and Martin Stein go through the trauma of joining their personas into Firestorm and emerge capable of transmuting and manipulating anything.

A proper superhero game has to let its characters use their powers properly at once. In fantasy and some modern-day simulation games, such as the horror-based *Call of Cthulu* and *Chill*, a new character is hardly capable of any feat. It takes a lot of time to develop into a major force in his world. Superhero characters should have no such problem.

For the most part, all superhero games share this view. Virtually all heroes created in any game system can use their powers easily and have at least a 50% chance of hitting what they aim at. The only variety seems to be in the cost to the hero.

Almost all the "generic" superhero games enforce a a form of bookkeeping. *Champions* characters expend "Endurance," *Superworld* characters consume "Energy" and *Villains and Vigilantes* players must use Power Points. The player must keep track and stop using powers when the points run out. *Golden Heroes* only uses this point system for certain powers, mainly energy projection powers.

Neither "official" superhero game—TSR's *Marvel Super Heroes* and Mayfair's *DC Heroes*—uses such a system. In *DC Heroes*, an unsuccessful "push" can rob the hero of a power for a short period of time. *Marvel Super Heroes* has no provision at all for exhaustion, except for loss of Karma when an extraordinary action is attempted.

Is this a problem? Is the bookkeeping necessary? In the comics, heroes rarely seem exhausted, except when it is important for the plot or the hero has been active for many hours. Game designers add these exhaustion systems as a method of balancing battles. They make sure that players pay for what they get. Game designers fear that players will attempt the most incredible feats if they don't have to pay for them. Game designers are convinced of this because they are also gamemasters and players. They *know* what their players would do—what *they* would do—if they had the opportunity to perform incredible feats with no loss.

"Official" games avoid this problem because players role-play a character. The Thing will not attempt Unearthly Strength feats because he doesn't have Unearthly Strength. Wonder Woman must make do with a Strength of 45 because that is what the designer gave her.

Does this mean that generic games *must* use bookkeeping because their players are not constrained by "reality"? Probably not. Neither *Supergame* nor *Golden Heroes* seem to suffer from the absence of bookkeeping.

HOW THEY FIGHT

In superhero comics, various colorful characters loaded with bulging muscles and/or flaring special effects blast and punch at each other, destroying vast quantities of property and occasionally knocking each other out. This superhero combat is a big part of the the thrills they offer.

A superhero game must duplicate these

SOME OF THE SUPERHERO ROLES YOU CAN PLAY

incredible feats of fortitude and derring-do.

Most generic games deal in characters who are very hard to knock out and who recover quickly. There is justification in the comics, but mostly this is a game mechanic that allows all the players to participate almost all the time.

However, when a DC Hero or Marvel Super Hero is knocked out, he is usually out for a long time. Moreover, relatively small quantitative differences in the characters can result in major disasters to the hero with the smaller quantity. For instance, in one combat between Sinestro (the evil Green Lantern) and Green Lantern (both characters supplied with the *DC Heroes* game), it only took one hit from Green Lantern's ring to knock Sinestro out of the combat.

Is this result more "real"? Considering that the Sinestro player neglected to set up a defense against the attack, perhaps the combat resolved itself correctly. An equivalent blast from a *Champions* or *Superworld* version of Green Lantern might have knocked out an equivalent Sinestro. In *Champions*, at least, the Sinestro character would probably have been awake and ready to fight again in the next couple of phases. The *DC Heroes* Sinestro was just plain out.

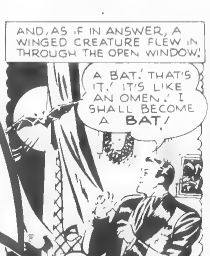
In the long run, the different fragility of characters in different systems is a matter of taste. For every comic book hero or villain knocked out with one blow there are instances of heroes and villains getting knocked down, casually shaking their heads and rising up to fight again. It all depends on the kind of game you want. The once-down-always-down version gives the gamemaster a chance for a lot of different encounters and battles. The always-rising-with-a-smile game allows for some really satisfying knock-down drag-out battles. The ideal would be to give the player ample opportunities for both kinds of game. I don't think it's really possible.

The important thing is to give the players a feeling that they are participating in comic book style combat. Most of the games on the market today do this well, though each takes a different tack. *Golden Heroes*, for instance, divides combat rounds up into "panels." Players roll dice to see who will go first and how many panels will be devoted to one side's part of the combat before the other side gets a chance to respond.

CONTINUED ON PART 4

LOOKING BACK ON THE GOLDEN AGE

BY ROB GOULART



1986 DC COMICS

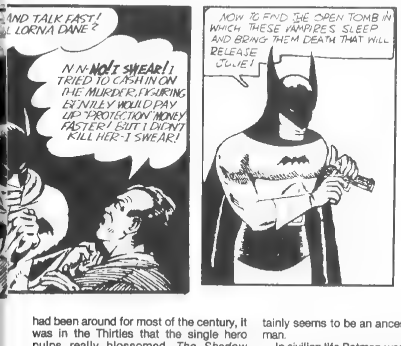
Forty-five years ago a small typeset announcement appeared in *Detective Comics*. "THE BATMAN!" it said. "This new thrilling adventure strip starts in the May issue of DETECTIVE COMICS! Don't miss it!" A month later, 27 (May, 1939) hit the stands and there on the cover was Batman, swinging over the rooftops with an armlock around the throat of a hoodlum in a green pinstrip suit. Inside the new hero led off the issue in a short, six-page story. Although the pointy ears on his cowl were a little lopsided and his batwing cape didn't fit exactly right, there was something intriguing about him. Once he shaped up and got his act together there was no stopping him. For a costumed hero without a single superpower he's managed to survive quite well while hundreds of latter day competitors have long since fallen by the wayside.

At the time Batman took to the rooftops there were few costumed crimefighters doing business in the comic books. During the eleven months since the advent of Superman only the Crimson Avenger had set up shop. A cloaked and masked fellow whose methods of operation were remarkably similar to those of radio's Green Hornet, the Avenger debuted in *Detective* 20 (October, 1938). It wasn't until after Batman that the deluge commenced. Before 1939 was over Wonder Man, the Sandman, the Flame, Blue Beetle, the Human Torch, Sub-Mariner and Amazing Man had all reached the newsstands. 1940 would see dozens more, including the Flash, Captain Marvel and Green Lantern.

Living up to its name, *Detective Comics* had featured nothing but detective characters in its first two years. Private eyes like Slam Bradley, Bruce Nelson and Larry Steele, official lawmen of various sorts such as Speed Saunders, Buck Marshall and Steve Malone. Even the redcloaked Crimson Avenger devoted himself to solving crimes and bringing criminals to justice. Batman therefore, when joining the magazine, was expected to carry on in this tradition. And that he did for the most part, rarely forgetting that he was basically a detective. True, he dressed in a rather striking fashion, but so did many of the pulp magazine crimebusters who'd inspired his creators.

One of the things the new original-material comic books of the 1930s did was deliver pulp magazine and movie elements in a funny paper format. The popular entertainments the artists and writers of this burgeoning new industry had enjoyed while growing up now got recycled and turned into comic book stories. Batman is one of the most successful examples of this, inspired by movie melodramas and pulpwood yarns but becoming a distinctive character in his own right. When Bob Kane and his writer friend Bill Finger invented Batman, they were only a few years out of their teens themselves and still very much in touch with the kind of adventure material that had excited them as kids.

Though pulpwood fiction magazines


AND TALK FAST! L. LORNA DANE?
N-N-NO! I SWEAR! I TRIED TO CASH IN ON THE MURDER, FIGURING EVENTUALLY WOULD PAY UP "PROTECTION" MONEY FASTER! BUT I DIDN'T KILL HER-I SWEAR!
NOW TO FIND THE OPEN TOMB IN WHICH THESE VAMPIRES SLEEP AND BRING THEM DEATH THAT WILL RELEASE JULIE!
© 1980 DC COMICS

had been around for most of the century, it was in the Thirties that the single hero pulps really blossomed. *The Shadow* began in 1931, followed by *Doc Savage, The Spider* and *The Phantom Detective* in 1933, *The Whisperer* in 1936 and *The Avenger* in 1939. The Thirties was definitely the decade of mystery men and they were to be found in just about every other popular entertainment medium as well. Radio offered the Lone Ranger and the Green Hornet, movies gave you such as Zorro, the Scarlet Pimpernel and the Lone Wolf, newspaper strips had the Phantom.

Bill Finger once said, "My first script was a take-off on a Shadow story. . . I patterned my style of writing Batman after the Shadow. Also after the Warner Bros. movies, the gangster movies." Kane has mentioned that another source of inspiration was a 1926 movie called *The Bat*, "in which the villain wore a bat-like costume which was quite awesome." Originally *The Bat* was a highly successful Boadway play by Avery Hopwood and Mary Roberts Rinehart. It was filmed again in 1931, under the title *The Bat Whispers*, with tough guy Chester Morris starring. Basically an old dark house story, it has to do with stolen money, secret rooms and passages and a crazed killer who dresses up like a bat. I recently saw the 1931 talkie version and the nightstalking Bat, especially when prowling the rooftops or casting his weird shadow on a wall, certainly seems to be an ancestor of our Batman.

In civilian life Batman was Bruce Wayne, "a bored young socialite." When night fell, however, playboy Wayne became "powerful and awesome" and a "weird menace to all crime." Unlike his more sedate contemporaries in the private investigator line, Batman didn't wait for cases to come to him. He prowled the city (New York in the earliest adventures and then Gotham), looking for trouble. He always found it, dropping down on burglaries, kidnapings, murders and worse. Although not above wisecracking while tangling with a half dozen gunmen, Batman was a pretty grim vigilante type in his early days. Besides his gadget-laden utility belt, he carried a .45 automatic and was not above using it. A trained athlete and acrobat, he was capable of breaking a man's neck with a well placed kick.

During his first months as a nocturnal avenger Batman alternated between combating gangsters and criminal masterminds. In *Detective* 29 and 30 he encountered a mad scientist who'd more than earned his nickname Dr. Death. Issues 31 and 21 found him journeying to Paris and Hungary to save his fiancee, Julie Madison, from the sinister Monk. A versatile as well as a nasty fellow, the Monk was both a vampire and a werewolf. In this two parter we get our first glimpse of the batarang and the batplane. In these distant days the citizens of

HE WAS CAPABLE OF BREAKING A MAN'S NECK WITH A WELL-PLACED KICK.

Manhattan were unused to such stylized modes of transportation as the batplane and when Batman flies over most of them are frightened—"We are attacked by Martians!" A few issues later Batman meets yet another master villain in the person of Professor Hugo Strange. A Moriarty sort and possessed of a "brilliant but distorted brain," the prof recurs a few times in the chronicles. He can make lightning, produce crippling fog and is also handy at creating giant man-monsters.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47

FUN & PROFIT

BY MIKE BENTON

ORGANIZING YOUR COLLECTION

Now be honest.

How many times in your comic collecting career have you said: "Someday I just got to get this furshluggiiner stack of comic books ORGANIZED."

Teen Titans in the guest room closet. X-Men in the metal file cabinet. She-Hulk under the bed in a box. (Now that's an interesting possibility!)

No matter how hard you try, it always seems as if keeping your comic book collection organized is a super-heroic task in itself.

Yet if you are going to intelligently collect comics (and some people might argue that's a contradiction in terms), you must have a fail-safe system of organization. Otherwise, you will: (1) Buy unwanted duplicates because you don't really know what you have; (2) Be unable to locate that one special comic you want to read/sell/trade/trash; (3) Damage, misplace, or lose Significant Issues.

Organizing any collection is a two-fold approach. First, there's the actual *physical* organization and storage of the books. Second, there's the *logical* ordering and organizing of the individual comics.

Logic can come later; first, let's get physical.

Thirty years ago, my first attempt at physically organizing my collection consisted of piling my comics in two stacks in a large box. Surprisingly enough, most collectors today still use some variation on this organization approach: Stack and Boxes.

As long as you stack your comics no more than 20 to 40 comics deep, this is an acceptable method. Watch out, however, that the stacks don't grow so high that the books begin to curl upwards and develop that crippling disease of comic books, Spine Roll.

Boxes are fine, too, as long as you do *not* use the typical cardboard boxes which are made of highly-acidic paper fibers. Storing comics in the usual cardboard box will make them yellow and brown in two to three years.

Notebook binders are an interesting approach, but they require the special purchase of Mylar binder sheets to hold the comics. Notebooks are recommended for more expensive books, but they're not economically feasible for a typical two or three thousand comic book collection.

I use all three methods myself. Recent and less expensive comics go into stacks that sit in a dark and cool closet. The permanent collection is packed into acid-free boxes with some in Mylar bags to offer support. The big-dollar books are in binders for easy access and to show off.

Now that seems easy enough. The fun starts when you try to develop some logical method of organizing the comics you now have stored away.

Most collectors use the straight alphabetical approach: Antman, Batman, Catgirl, Dogboy and so forth. Simple enough if you can ever decide if *Amazing Spiderman* goes under "A" or "S," or if *Adams Family* should be before or after *Adam-12*.

Quite frankly, I don't like alphabetical organization because it's too simple. Besides that, it makes it all too easy for comic book thieves to come into your house and go right to the "X"s and steal all of your ultra-valuable *X-Men*.

Seriously, alphabetical organization works best when it is used with some other method, such as first separating your collection out by publisher, and then alphabetical by title.

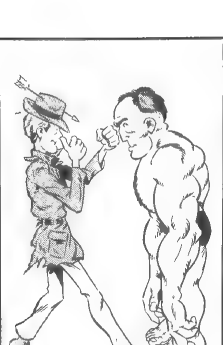
A few iconoclastic collectors insist on organizing their collections by date and year of issue. Thus, they have all their comics from 1982 in one stack, 1983 in another box, and so on. Chronological organization makes great sense for coin (or calendar!) collectors, but promises only frustration for the comic collector who must first decide if *Spiderman* #252 came out in 1983 or 1984 before he can locate it in his collection.

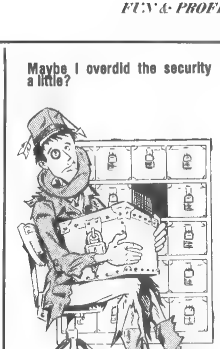
Organizing a collection by artist is also great fun if you only collect a few major artists; otherwise you're going to have to have a thousand different little stacks.

Actually there are so many ways of logically ordering a comic collection that I'll give you a quick listing of the usual approaches:

(1) By Title (alphabetically).
(2) By Publisher.
(3) By Date.
(4) By Artist.
(5) By Character(s).
(6) By Genre.
(7) By Condition.
(8) By Number.
(9) By Cover.
(10) By Personal Preference.

Keep in mind that most advanced collectors use two or three of these approaches together. For example, I have a Charlton (publisher) collection of Ditko (ar-





tist) comics from the mid-1950s (date) arranged alphabetically (title) and numerically (number).

Other collectors use even more arcane organization methods. One collector once showed me two closets full of comic books. "The one on the right has all the comics I've already read; the one on the left has the comics I haven't read yet."

And as for the category, "Personal Preference,":

One collector (noted for his twisted sense of humor) once took me into his collection room that contained nearly 20,000 comics.

"Now here," he said as he pulled out three huge boxes, "are all my comics with purple covers. And in that closet are all the ones with yellow covers. . ."

Well, as long as it works for him.

After you decide upon both a physical and logical approach to organizing your collection, you'll need some way to maintain that organization.

Not too many people can keep track of every comic in their collections in their head. Most of us must turn to trusty "Want Lists" to help us with our collections.

Want lists are great fun to make up. They allow you to go really wild and write down every comic book that you eventually hope to obtain.

I started doing this one week, and three days later I had a forty page listing that could be used as a supplement to the *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide*.

I quickly discovered that "Have Lists" are more practical for most collectors (at least for those of us who have no self-control).

So start a page for each title you collect. As you buy a copy of that title, record its number *and* its condition (if it's a back issue book). This will give you a running inventory of your entire collection, and allow you to quickly determine an approximate value of its worth.

For those with computers, a good data base or file manager program can be easily adapted for your comic collection. Don't forget that you will still have to enter all the data on your books by hand into the computer, so it doesn't save you that much time.

Okay, now your collection is finally arranged in alphanumeric *and* chronological order, sorted by publisher and stored in titanium steel filing cabinets. You have daily computer print-outs of Want Lists, Have Lists and Buy Lists. You own a bookcase full of artist indexes and Marvel checklists.

So go ahead, reward yourself!

Stroll over to the "G thru I" file cabinet. Pull out your duplicate VG issue of *Homer the Happy Ghost* Vol 2 #1, 1969, Atlas/Marvel reprint. Lay back on your bed. Shriek when you discover that the center page is missing.

Now file it carefully away in your acid-free box that's labeled "Comic Books With Missing Centerfolds."

Don't you feel all warm and organized?

*****

Recently there has been a new trend in back issue comic book sales.

Dealers and advertisers are hyping comic books, having come from some key large collection or the other. You see such terms as "Poughkeepsie File Copy," "Mile High Collection," "Harvey Warehouse Copy," "Larson Collection" used to describe a particular comic when it is offered for sale.

Originally these terms were used to tell a collector that such books were in extra-nice condition. Thus, those like-new Dell comics which were stored in the publisher's files through the 1950s and 1960s are described as "Poughkeepsie books"; the often-seen term "Mile High" refers to comics from a collection of exceptional Golden Age books discovered in the early 1970s.

This line of ownership is called a comic's "pedigree." Now pedigrees are great for breeding poodles, but I question their validity in the field of comic collecting.

Animated Antics

BY JAMES VAN HISE

saturday morning star wars

Their work is seen on the brand-new, better-than-average Saturday morning cartoon entry *Droids & Ewoks*. But Nelvana is no newcomer to the animation business.

It was founded in 1970 by Michael Hersh, Patrick Loubert and Clive Smith. Hersh, President of Nelvana Animation, tells how the company came to be.

"Patrick and I went to York University in Toronto together and made experimental student films there. That's where we met Clive Smith, who had emigrated to Canada from Britain. He's an animator and designer, and we met him when we got our first jobs prior to starting Nelvana. I called him, trying to find another designer, and he said, 'Look no further, I'm your guy.' So we hired him, and because we couldn't afford to pay him then, we made him a partner. And that's the story of how Nelvana became Nelvana."

They started with 3-D animation, using clay and plasticine. They did sub-contract work which ended up on *Sesame Street*, which actually predated the formal creation of the company. But in 1971, they stopped doing clay animation to concentrate on cel animation.

"We were doing drop-ins for some Canadian programs, and in about '73 we started doing experimental films for kids which were shown on the CBC and were a combination of live-action and animation," Hersh continues. "We made ten of those and they were horrendously low-budget. These were 15 minute films made for about 6 thousand dollars. They'd have about 3 minutes of animation and 10 of live-action and featured kids in performing roles. They were a chance for us to experiment and try different things. Today they're just buried in the vaults because they were so low-budget, but they were little sketches. We always go back to see what we did.

IS LUKE SKYWALKER SURPRISED

"In the same period in the early Seventies, we did documentaries, industrials and a lot of stuff like that in live-action. We were always doing animation and live-action."

One of the first things the new company did was discover Canada's long-lost comic books. Published during World War Two when there was an embargo on non-essential imports, they were known as the Canadian Whites.

"We did a book which detailed their history called *The Great Canadian Comics*," Hersh reveals, "and we bought the rights to the majority of the titles by one publisher. We not only did the book but also a traveling show for the National Gallery of Canada and collected all of the original artwork which was still extant for the national museum. We also did a television documentary and that took about a year of our time together." The company name, Nelvana, is derived from an old Canadian comic strip, "Nelvana of the Northern Lights." A page of original artwork from this old strip hangs in their office reception area.

ONWARD & UPWARD

"The big break that came through for the company was in 1976 when we started production on *A Cosmic Christmas*, an animated Christmas special. It was the first thing we did which was a full-length animated show," Hersh continues. "It was half an hour but everything else before that had been combinations of live action and animation. We discovered that by concentrating on animation, we could focus our talents and energy. We produced a show that a lot of people liked and it really led the way for where we should go. It showed us how to reach the audience and it was quite popular.

"We then proceeded to do five more

AT THE LATEST ANTICS OF HIS FRIENDS?

animated specials in the same form. They were a lot looser than most people's animated specials. They were a lot more contemporary in approach and we developed a feel and a touch that was more contemporary than anyone else, but not hard-edged like the Ralph Bakshi films. We did things that anyone of any age would have enjoyed watching."

A couple of years ago Nelvana produced an animated feature called *Rock & Rule*. Other than some test-market screenings, the film did not receive a general release. Nelvana president Michael Hersh feels that the film failed because in their attempt to reach a broader audience, they made a film which was not aimed at any focused audience at all. It wound up not appealing to anyone. When they made the *Care Bears* movie, they were very focused on who their audience was. The film was a hit.

Nelvana's Lucasfilm connection began back in '78 when they were contracted to do a short segment in the CBS Star Wars holiday special. Their 10-minute cartoon introduced Boba Fett. While the special as a whole was not successful, both Lucasfilm and Nelvana were pleased with their working relationship. This ultimately led to *Droids*.

"One of the challenges for us is to do this new project and be faithful to the existing galaxy, the existing monument they've created. And at the same time do something that is fresh, different and stands on its own," Hersh asserts. "We give them the breathing space so that the original three movies stand on their own. In no way do these cartoons have any impact on that existing library. They're clearly something different.

"I would say that there has been a real desire on the part of Nelvana, ABC and Lucasfilm to be true to the Lucas spirit and the Lucas galaxy which was established in the movies," Hersh continues, "and be consistent. There was a tremendous amount of research. The new characters make sense in that galaxy and that world. We don't do things which don't fit in that galaxy."

From its title, it's obvious that *Droids* focuses on the robot duo R2D2 and C3PO. Luke Skywalker and other major human characters from the *Star Wars* mythos will not be in evidence.

"It's a prequel," Hersh explains, "which is twenty to thirty years in the past. They're already a team on the road. They're like the Laurel & Hardy, the Hope & Crosby duo who are on the road looking for a master, and helping different masters."

CONTINUED ON PAGE

SPIDER-MAN

"With great power comes great responsiblity" describes the motivating force of everyone's favorite wallcrawler. It is also the credo of the three Spider-writers and their editor. Whenever Amazing Tom DeFalco, Spectacular Peter David, Webby David Michelinie and Spider-editor Jim Owsley gather for a famous Spider-lunch, the words echo throughout the dining room, shaking crystal and vibrating the silverware.

Peter Parker may be a loner, but he is hardly a hapless loser. What he does have is a sense of obligation to his fellow beings that just doesn't quit!

BY JIM VAN HISE

David, writer of *Peter Parker, the Spectacular Spider-Man*, states quite matter-of-factly, "Peter Parker is a character with great dignity. Many people regard him as some sort of schlemiel, but that's hardly the case. He's always chosen his own road and has done so willingly and consciously. When he did not fit in at high school it was because he chose not to. When the other kids were running off to have a good time, Peter chose to study. Parker has always been a loner and as Spider-Man he became a super-powered loner. He doesn't fit in with the Avengers and even looks odd with them. He does not fit in with any team.

"The whole thing that makes Peter Parker work is his sense of responsibility. Because of his initial mess-up with his uncle, he feels that he is constrained to act, whenever possible, in a manner for the benefit of other people. Spider-Man regards himself as a protector of innocents and it's something that has carried over all this time.

"There's the old line," David continues, "that with great power comes great responsibility. But responsibility for what? I think that it is to use that power for the greatest good, namely to protect people who do not have such power. On the other hand, he does not necessarily go out looking for trouble. He goes swinging around the city but the reason he's looking for trouble is so that he can photogaph it for *The Daily Bugle*. He does not go on patrol. He is not your typical superhero. He's unique."

"You can't get away from the fact that he has his problems, but I think that he became the butt of a lot of class jokes because of his sense of responsibility," observes DeFalco, scripter of the original Spider-Title, *The Amazing Spider-Man*. "He had so many things to do that he didn't have time to hang around with the other kids.

"One of the things I admire most about Peter Parker as a character is that he's just an average guy who perceives himself to be an average guy. Sure he can stick to walls and have the speed and agility of a spider, but aside from that he's pretty normal. In a recent issue he said that he hates wearing anything that makes him stick out in a crowd, and this from someone who wears a red and blue skintight costume with little lines on it. A lot of his confidence comes from putting on the mask. In real life I've seen people putting on the Spider-Man costume and acting a lot less inhibited. The nice thing about Peter Parker is that the character is always wise-cracking but they fail to notice that on most of those same occasions, Parker

MEMORIES:
DON'T WORRY, AUNT MAY! EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT! I KNOW IT WILL!
YOU-- YOU WON'T LEAVE ME, DEAR...?
I'LL BE RIGHT HERE ALL THE TIME--I PROMISE!
HOW'D BIG, BRAVE PETER HURT HIS POOR LITTLE ARM? DID YOU TRY TO TURN TOO MANY HEAVY PAGES AT ONE TIME, BOOKWORM? OR DID YOU DROP A NASTY LITTLE TEXT ON IT IN THE LAB?
C'MON AND FIGHT, CHICKEN! I'LL PAINT MY PUNCH AS MUCH AS I CAN, BUT SHE DOESN'T REALIZE THAT TO ME IT SEEMS TO BE MOVING IN SLOW MOTION!
THE ENFORCERS. EH? I'VE HEARD OF THEM. BUT HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED?
I'M AFRAID TO TELL HIM THE TRUTH. IF HE KNOWS I FOOLISHLY BORROWED MONEY FROM A LOAN SHARK, HE'LL TRY TO HELP ME AND WE'LL END UP BOTH HURT OR WORSE!

AND, A FEW MINUTES LATER, PETER PARKER FORGETS THE TAUNTS OF HIS CLASSMATES AS HE IS TRANSPORTED TO ANOTHER WORLD -- THE FASCINATING WORLD OF ATOMIC SCIENCE!
AND NOW FOR A DEMONSTRATION OF HOW WE CAN CONTROL RADIOACTIVE RAYS HERE IN THE LABORATORY...
BUT, AS THE EXPERIMENT BEGINS, NO ONE NOTICES A TINY SPIDER, DESCENDING FROM THE CEILING ON AN ALMOST INVISIBLE STRAND OF WEB...
A SPIDER WHOM FATE HAS GIVEN A STARRING, IF BRIEF, ROLE TO PLAY IN THE DRAMA WE CALL LIFE!
ACCIDENTALLY ABSORBING A FANTASTIC AMOUNT OF RADIOACTIVITY, THE DYING INSECT, IN SUDDEN SHOCK, BITES THE NEAREST LIVING THING, AT THE SPLIT SECOND BEFORE LIFE EBBS FROM ITS RADIOACTIVE BODY!
OW!
A SPIDER! IT BIT ME! BUT, WHY IS IT BURNING SO? WHY IS IT BURNING THAT WAY?
MY HEAD IT FEELS STRANGE! I NEED SOME AIR!
LOOKS AS THOUGH OUR EXPERIMENT UNNERVED YOUNG PARKER!
TOO BAD! HE MUST HAVE A WEAK STOMACH!

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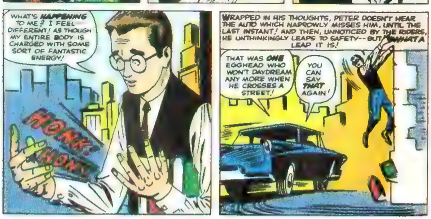
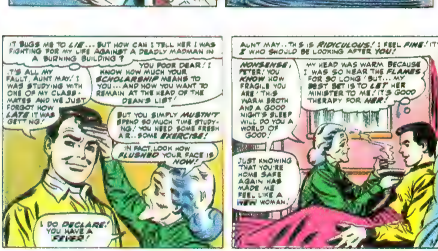

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? I FEEL DIFFERENT! AS THOUGH MY ENTIRE BODY IS CHARGED WITH SOME SORT OF FANTASTIC ENERGY!
HOKK!
HOKK!
WRAPPED IN HIS THOUGHTS, PETER DOESN'T HEAR THE AUTO WHICH NARROWLY MISSES HIM. UNTIL THE LAST INSTANT! AND THEN, UNNOTICED BY THE DRIVER, HE UNTHINKINGLY LEAPS TO SAFETY -- BUT WHAT A LEAP IT IS!
THAT WAS ONE EGGHEAD WHO WON'T DAYDREAM ANY MORE WHEN HE CROSSES A STREET!
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN!


IT BUGS ME TO LIE... BUT HOW CAN I TELL HER I WAS FIGHTING FOR MY LIFE AGAINST A DEADLY MADMAN IN A BURNING BUILDING?
'TIS ALL MY FAULT, AUNT MAY. I WAS STUDYING WITH ONE OF MY CLASSMATES AND WE JUST FORGOT HOW LATE IT WAS GETTING!
YOU POOR DEAR! I KNOW HOW MUCH YOUR SCHOLARSHIP MEANS TO YOU... AND HOW YOU WANT TO REMAIN AT THE HEAD OF THE DEAN'S LIST!
BUT YOU SIMPLY MUSTN'T SPEND SO MUCH TIME STUDYING. YOU NEED SOME FRESH AIR... SOME EXERCISE!
IN FACT, LOOK HOW FLUSHED YOUR FACE IS NOW!
I DO DECLARE! YOU HAVE A FEVER!
AUNT MAY, 'TIS RIDICULOUS! I FEEL FINE! IT'S I WHO SHOULD BE LOOKING AFTER YOU!
NONSENSE, PETER! YOU KNOW HOW FRAGILE YOU ARE! THIS WARM BROTH AND A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP WILL DO YOU A WORLD OF GOOD!
JUST KNOWING THAT YOU'RE HOME SAFE AGAIN HAS MADE ME FEEL LIKE A NEW WOMAN!
MY HEAD WAS WARM BECAUSE I WAS SO NEAR THE FLAMES FOR SO LONG! BUT... MY BEST BET IS TO LET HER MINISTER TO ME, IT'S GOOD THERAPY FOR HER!

hands out wisecracks, too. When we switched to the black costume, Ron Frenz and I had a discussion because we weren't sure how we should handle him until we realized that whatever color costume he wears he's always the same person. He's a nice guy. He screws up a lot but he tries hard."

Michelinie is the new regular writer on the newest of the Spider-Titles, *The Web of Spider-Man*. He is just starting to shape his own little corner of the Spider-World. "Since I'm new to the book, I'm still formulating my opinions on who Peter Parker is. But over the years, I'd say that the character has matured. I think that his personality changes somewhat with each writer. The character deals with each situation as he sees it. Perhaps Dr. Octopus or someone may manage to keep coming back, but that doesn't mean that he's going to get tired of dealing with the menace. He tackles each situation as it comes along."

PETER DAVID AND THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN

Presently, plans are underfoot which will affect all of the titles. Even so, they will all retain their own stamp of individuality. That individuality is being brought to *Peter Parker, the Spectacular Spider-Man* by writer David. When asked whether there was going to be a subtle difference in approach between his title and the others, he laughed and indicated that the difference wasn't going to be subtle at all!

"The mood of *Peter Parker* is grittier. We're going to be experimenting with storytelling style and subject matter. The basic inspiration for it is that we're trying to give it a *Hill Street Blues* style of material. That's why every issue now ends with a black box with white lettering, just like *Hill Street* does. Every single issue, we'll be hanging by our thumbnails, hoping that the Comics Code lets it go by. We'll have at

IT WORKED! MY ARMS ALMOST CAME OFF, BUT THIS IS DEFINITELY THE FASTEST WAY TO GET WHERE I'M GOING!
I THINK I'M GOING TO NEED AN OCEANFUL OF BEN-GAY LATER.

least one segment that we'll wonder whether the Code will pass.

"We're trying to show things realistically," David emphasizes, "not for shock value. We weren't sure, for instance, that the Code would let us get away with showing a priest getting killed. To those who say that we're showing the violence in a brutal fashion in *Peter Parker*, my response is: No, violence *is* brutal—we're just showing it realistically."

A wide variety of topics will be covered in the months to come in this title. These encounters will be unique in Spider-Man's life as well as, in some cases, the entire superhero canon.

"For instance, in issue 110, when Spider-Man gets his hands on the main bad guy, he literally beats the living crap out of him because he's so furious," he reveals. "In about a year, I'm going to bring that character back. His condition is going to reflect the realities of what enduring a beating at the hands of such a super-powered character as Spider-Man would actually be like."

The *Peter Parker* book will have many other ususual storylines.

"In issue 112, we're going to reveal that one of our characters is an unwed mother. Randy Robertson will be returning after a lengthy time. He's going to be married to a white woman. That isn't done much in comics. We have a realistic fight scene in a hospital which shows the implications of what a fight in a hospital would be like. We have a guy dressed up like Santa Claus who's a second story man. He goes to houses and the kids let him in. He takes small portable objects like televisions, telling the kids that he'll be returning on Christmas with big televisions. He tells the kids not to say that he's been there, so nobody notices that these weird burglaries are being done. I'm not dead sure that the Code is going to let us do that! The main villain in my first couple of issues is revealed to be a cop. I always have to won-

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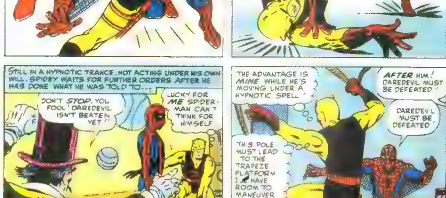
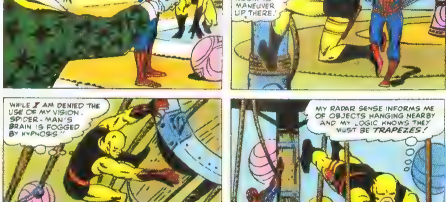
AND SO, THE TWO MASHED ADVERSARIES BATTLE... A BATTLE CAUSED BY THE BOTCHED EFFORTS OF THE RINGMASTER!
HIS STRENGTH BEING IT'S MANY TIMES GREATER THAN THAT OF A NORMAL...
DAREDEVIL IS MUCH FASTER THAN WOULD HAVE GUESSED!
I CAN'T POSSIBLY MATCH HIS OWN SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH! MY ONLY CHANCE IS TO OUT-THINK HIM!
I HAVE SAVED THE RINGMASTER AS HE COMMANDED!


STILL IN A HYPNOTIC TRANCE, NOT ACTING UNDER HIS OWN WILL, SPIDEY WAITS FOR FURTHER ORDERS AFTER HE HAS DONE WHAT HE WAS TOLD TO...!
DON'T STOP, YOU FOOL! DAREDEVIL ISN'T BEATEN YET!
LUCKY FOR ME SPIDER-MAN CAN'T THINK FOR HIMSELF!
THE ADVANTAGE IS MINE WHILE HE'S MOVING UNDER A HYPNOTIC SPELL.
AFTER HIM! DAREDEVIL MUST BE DEFEATED!
DAREDEVIL MUST BE DEFEATED!
THIS POLE MUST LEAD TO THE TRAPEZE PLATFORM. I HAVE ROOM TO MANEUVER UP THERE!


WHILE I AM DENIED THE USE OF MY VISION, SPIDER-MAN'S BRAIN IS FOGGED BY HYPNOSIS!
THUS, NEITHER OF US HAS A CLEAR-CUT ADVANTAGE!
MY RADAR SENSE INFORMS ME OF OBJECTS HANGING NEARBY AND MY LOGIC KNOWS THEY MUST BE TRAPEZES!
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE ME AS EASILY AS THAT, DAREDEVIL!

R. BUCKLER '85

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der how much the Code is going to allow us to get away."

David has very specific goals for his work on the title—namely, he's aiming the comic at people much like himself.

"What we're trying to do is gear *Peter Parker* for the readers my age (28). This does not mean that a reader can't enjoy it. I got a call from an eleven year old who absolutely loves *Peter Parker*. But I am putting in things that a younger reader would not catch—things that are implied; subject matter that we haven't dealt with before. In issue 108 innocent bystanders get hurt by a rifle blast which Spider-Man dodges by instinct. They go down and Spider-Man has to deal with that."

This new approach is the joint decision of editor Owsley and writer David. "He wanted a Spider-Man book with a gritty, realistic feel. I said 'That's funny, because that's what I would like to do.' To a certain extent I'm trying to get to the grittiness that you see in the old Stan Lee/Steve Ditko Spider-Man stories. I'm trying to go back to the basics while going off in another direction.

"I have a slightly skewed vision of comic books, what I try to do is constantly keep the readers off-guard. Part of the problem with a lot of readers is that when they first started reading comics, a lot of what was done was new to them. That is why people most fondly remember the books they started with. I remember the Sixties books. To me, Ditko's translation of the character is the best. But as readers get older, they start to see a lot of things that are coming. It's hard to surprise them. I'm trying to get that surprise for the long-time reader. I want to have them say: 'Wow, that wasn't at all what I expected!' If the older readers can't see it coming, the younger readers certainly won't. In issue 109, I reveal the secret identity of my main villain. To my knowledge, only three people figured it out ahead of time. I want every issue to catch people off guard. The ideal is when they read an issue and then go back and read it through again.

"Rich Buckler is doing incredible work on the book. Fortunately both Rich and I have very cinematic views of comic books. We mesh very well. Rich has been turning in phenomenal work. He gives me just what I ask for, which is always nice. I find it a tremendous opportunity because he was the first pro I ever met eight or nine years ago. We're even bringing back Deathlok in *Peter Parker*, which is a character near and dear to Rich's heart."

David reveals other plans and plot tidbits from forthcoming issues. Issue 112 will be a Christmas story. It plays off the documented fact that for people who are young and single, Christmas is a very depressing time of the year and sees a marked increase in suicides. "Peter spends a good chunk of that issue being depressed, but it's not a depressing Christmas story. It has an upbeat, appropriately schmaltzy ending that I couldn't get away with in any other issue."

Issue 113 of *Peter Parker* features the Mauler in a story which he carefully describes by saying, "I think it's going to catch a lot of people off guard."

Issue 114 is titled "Terror in the Old Folks Home" and plays on Spider-Man's new awareness of the danger his battles can pose for innocent non-participants. Says David, "Some characters return from issue 110 and take over Aunt May's boarding house. Because of the innocents killed during an earlier storyline, Spider-Man finds himself wanting to save Aunt May and the other old people, but having to work up the nerve to do so."

Then 115 launches a lengthy subplot with The Black Cat where we learn why Spider-Man has been having such abominable luck lately. "People think that we've just been dumping on him unfairly," David explains, "but in 115 you'll learn that this is not the case." This issue also features Dr. Strange as a guest-star.

This leads into 116 which involves The Black Cat and a new villain called The Foreigner. "He's the world's top assassin," he reveals. "This guy is so good that 37 law enforcement agencies swear that he cannot possibly exist. He is schooled in every form of combat known to man and seven that aren't!" Sabretooth also appears and actually manages to beat himself! "That should be terribly entertaining," hints David.

"Because of events which occur in 116, The Black Cat is hacked off with Spider-Man. She wants to get back at him. The situation is that a guy breaks up with his girlfriend but she knows some embarrassing things about him. Peter Parker has this girlfriend who knows that he likes to dress up in black tights and swing around the city. Rather than just reveal his identity outright, she leaves him to wonder when or if she's going to reveal it. This is much more aggravating for him. During the course of a year, no one is going to know which side The Black Cat is on. She's going to form an alliance with the Foreigner. I really like The Black Cat and I want a lot of people to like her. I think that people are going to be excited by what I'm doing with her."

The stories which David is writing for *Peter Parker* are underscored by his views of the character as he has changed over the years.

"I view Peter Parker as being angry. He's been at this for seven years and he has a very black-and-white definition of the world. There's the good guys and the bad guys. For seven years he's been protecting innocents but they're still getting hurt and killed while crime is not on the decrease. All of the bad guys he collars just wind up back out on the streets again. He became Spider-man when someone close to him died because he didn't do something he should have. Now he's doing all the things that he should and loved ones still die, like Gwen Stacy, Capt. Stacy, etc. That should

WHEN DAD AND I... NEEDED A FRIEND...
WHEN NEITHER OF US KNEW WHERE TO TURN...
THAT WAS WHEN... YOU BETRAYED US!
BUT, IT WASN'T WHAT YOU THOUGHT!
YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN TO ME...
OH PETER I WANT TO BELIEVE YOU!
I'LL LISTEN! BUT... LISTEN TO WHAT?
I... DON'T KNOW!
I DON'T KNOW NOW... TO EXPLAIN!
LITTLE MARY JANE HEARD THE GOOD NEWS!..
ABOUT YOU AND GWENDOLYNE BEING PERFECT!
I KNEW YOU'D COME TO YOUR SENSES SOONER OR LATER, TIGER!
AFTER ALL... HOW LONG CAN A BOY DIG SOMEONE ELSE WHEN YOURS TRULY IS ON THE SCENE?
LOOK ALIVE, LADDIE! RUMOR HATH IT THAT YOU ACTUALLY TALK!
SORRY, MJ... GUESS I'M JUST NOT IN THE MOOD TODAY.
© 1985 Marvel Comics Group
PETER PARKER PAYS THE PRIC

become very frustrating.

"Peter Parker is supposed to be everyman," David continues, "and he must reflect the climate that we find in society today, particularly of people who dwell in big cities. They see crime and violence every night on the news and are angry and upset. Since Peter Parker fights crime all the time, it should be personally aggravating for him. That's what I'm trying to put across in *Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spider-Man*."

THE WEB OF DAVID MICHELINIE

While Michelinie has written Spider-Man before ("The Twilight Heroes" in *Web of Spider-Man 9, for example*), he's only just joined the book as its regular scripter. He has conceived a storyline which will take Peter Parker out of New York as well as out of the country. Parker becomes a globe-trotting photographer for the resurrected Now magazine (Now is revived in issue 16 of *Web*). His first assignment (in issues 17 and 18) will take him to Appalachia but world travels don't begin until issue 20.

"This is going to change the approach to the stories. He'll be out of the country three-quarters of any given year," Michelinie reveals. "Obviously it's going to be a problem having him conveniently running into Dr. Octopus in Brussells and the Scorpion in Tokyo. He's going to be divorced from his regular rogues gallery of villains as well as his supporting cast. Aunt May won't be globe-trotting with him, nor will Robbie Robertson. The stories will be self-contained with two or three-issue runs of a particular continuity. This doesn't mean that there won't be a regular supporting cast. For instance, J. Jonah Jameson might decide he wants to get back into reporting and go along with Peter for one issue. Mary Jane could have a modeling job in Paris when Peter goes there. But, for the most part, other characters will be introduced and the regular supporting cast will be limited."

Michelinie has written for other Marvel characters including Iron Man and the Avengers. But writing for Spider-Man is a whole new ball game.

"When I was writing *Iron Man*, the only other place he was appearing was in *The Avengers*, which I was also writing. I had total control over the character. With Spider-Man, every month that I write a story, he's also appearing in two other titles. I can't really sit down and say: 'This is what I want to do with Spider-Man!' because there are two other people senior to me in the Spider-Man universe who have things they want to do with the character. I can't just ignore them. I'm trying very hard to at least acknowledge the other stories and not contradict anything.

"The global slant in *Web of Spider-Man* will solve that to an extent. If he's off in Tunisia for a couple of issues, I won't have to worry about the other titles. I will just have to worry about fitting in when he comes back to New York.

"It usually takes me several issues to get comfortable with a series. With Spider-Man, it's going to take longer. Not only am I getting used to coordinating with everyone and gettin thrown surprises from right and left, but I'm also writing him differently. When I took on *Web*, I thought that I would be writing the Spider-Man I'm used to. But the Spider-Man I'm used to lives in New York and goes to see Aunt May and Mary Jane. I can't do that! The Spider-Man in *Web* will only do that once every three or four issues. I don't have a specific plot for the European travel. I'm thinking in terms of setting a story in Ireland simply because the religious wars would be a natural for a reporter and photographer. There is built-in conflict and pathos—children are getting blown up! That's drama. You don't have to embellish it. Just show it for what it is and you've got some powerful stuff. I'm thinking of setting a two or three issue run in Britain and I'm sure that politics will play a part in that."

Since Spider-Man's adventures have largely taken place in the U.S. or in space, the character will be encountering other countries' perceptions of himself for the first time. How would a foreigner view this oddball Yank super character?

"This is something that I'm going to learn as I plot the stories," Michelinie explains. "I haven't sat down and thought, 'Well, how is Spider-Man perceived by the French peasant?' One problem is that if Peter Parker goes to Australia and then Spider-Man happens to be there that week while the next week Peter's in Bangkok and Spider-Man's there, his secret identity will be in jeopardy. Spider-Man is going to learn to keep a low profile in his adventures across the great waters. I'll figure out a lot of that when I get to it."

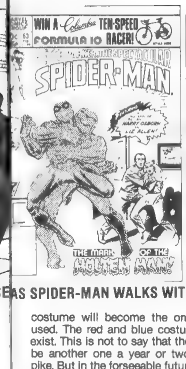
This dilemma opens up a wide array of possibilities. Will Spider-Man operate under other identities? Will he adopt the guise of an already existing superhero? Michelinie has a variety of ideas, but Peter Parker pulling on a different, highly recognizeable costume is probably not among them.

"I don't think that he would disguise himself as Captain America or Daredevil without talking to them first. When I was at the San Diego Comicon this year, a dealer from Chicago said that there was someone coming into his store saying that they were me. They were even signing autographs! I freaked! Apparently this guy was a pleasant fellow. But that there was someone else saying they were me made me feel really strange. I don't think that Spider-Man would take on someone else's identity without them okaying it first," Michelinie continues.

"The plot that I'm doing now doesn't have him appear in costume except in a brief flashback."

Which bring us to a shocking change involving Spider-Man's costume!"

"As of *Web* 17," he reveals, "the red and blue costume is destroyed; the black



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AS SPIDER-MAN WALKS WITH DANGER

costume will become the only costume used. The red and blue costume will not exist. This is not to say that there couldn't be another one a year or two down the pike. But in the forseeable future, the black costume will be the only Spider-Man costume. This will occur about April '85."

In order to pull this off, Michelinie had to coordinate things through his editor, Jim Owsley, and the other Spider-Writers, Tom DeFalco and Peter David. This is due to a very special cliffhanger ending which he wrote for *Web* 17. But more on this later.

As of this early date, Michelinie is still formulating plans for *Web of Spider-Man*.

"As far as guest-stars go, I don't have any plans other than for a villain for two. I'm still working into this globe-trotting storyline. I'm sure that when I get more comfortable with that, I'll try to find Marvel characters who are located throughout the world. I will use them in *Web* a bit more solidly within the Marvel universe and less strongly with the backdrop of Manhattan. I was thinking of putting The Mauler into the Ireland story because he's Irish but I found out that Peter David is using him in *Peter Parker* 113. That might be too close to when I would be using the villain. We don't want to use the guy every six months."

While every Spider-Writer works with one eye firmly fixed on the constantly moving Spider-Man universe, there is one version of Spidey which no one is supposed to worry about—the daily newspaper strip.

"I don't take it into my considerations at all. The newspaper strip hasn't been mentioned to me in the five months I've been on *Web*," Michelinie explains, "so I assume that it's off on its own."

Michelinie reveals that *Spider-man* graphic novels are in the works. "There are several. There is one by Berni Wrightson which I believe was written and drawn and should be out sometime this year. There's one that Bob Layton has gotten approval on doing. And at least a third one."

He says that there are no further tie-in with *Secret Wars* scheduled for *Web*. "There are tie-ins in both *Peter Parker* and *Amazing Spider-Man*. The one in *Amazing* will lead into the conclusion of *Secret Wars II*. But none of that is happening in *Web*."

THE AMAZING TOM DEFALCO

Of the three books, *The Amazing Spider-Man* sticks the closest to those stories identified with the character as he has been for many years. While the darker side of the superhero mythos is being uncovered in *Peter Parker* and Spider-Man is off to see the seven wonders of the world in *Web*, *Amazing* is different. In issue 271 he encountered a character who hadn't appeared in the book since *Amazing Fantasy* 15, the wrestler that Peter Parker defeated in his earliest super-powered days. But while many readers regard the old Peter Parker as a hapless soul, DeFalco, like Peter David, is quick to challenge that view.

"I think that when one refers to Spider-Man in the beginning as being hapless, you're just looking at the surface details of the character. I look at Peter Parker as a man with an enormous sense of responsibility. I don't see him as a loser. He sees himself as a loser, but I see him as a man who allows his responsibility to overwhelm his personal satisfaction. Peter Parker can't go out with a pretty girl because his aunt is sick and he needs money and Dr. Octopus is in the city again. Even though he'd rather go out on a date with a pretty girl, he has a responsibility to stop Dr. Octopus. At the end of the story, when he has stopped Dr. Octopus and saved the city, he perceives himself as a loser because he didn't get the girl. This is backwards because he's saved all of us!

"There is a nice historical tradition that goes back to the beginning of literature—that heroes tend to be self-sacrificing and that's why we admire them. If it's a choice between going out and getting my head kicked in by Dr. Octopus and taking Mary Jane Wason out to dinner, I have no interest in risking my life. That's what makes Peter Parker a hero and Tom DeFalco an average person."

DeFalco also takes exception to the perception that Peter Parker hes always had problems getting a girlfriend.

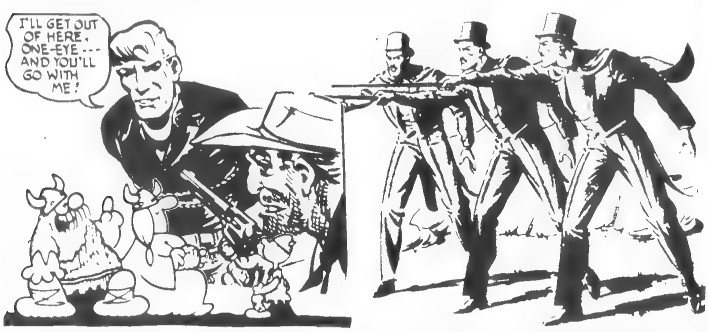
"Girls always found him attractive. If you check back in the early issues, there was Liz Allen and Betty Brant and they were constantly struggling for Peter. Things never quite worked out for him but he alway had those two girls. And then Mary Jane Watson came on the scene. He had his pick! It never worked out for him because he had so many other things to take care of."

The stories in *Amazing Spider-Man* are intended to feature the traditional cast of characters and villains, but still overlap the tales in *Web* and *Peter Parker*. With Kathryn Cushing as the new city editor of *The Daily Bugle* (replacing Robbie Robertson), Peter Parker has to compete more heavily with other news photogs. What isn't generally realized is that Parker isn't a particularly terrific photographer, he just manages to get the best pics of Spider-Man; shots of headline-making conflicts that no other photographer is able to catch.

"We're going to be a little open-minded about his career," he reveals. As to whether this might lead Parker to marriage one day, Tom states simply, "It's possible. We can change anything."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

Publishers Picks



Tired of superheroes? Well, probably not. But I am, so I'm going to take a break from them for an issue to acquaint you with some other comic storytelling items that I have been enjoying lately. And since I am both the editor and the publisher of this fine mag, I am sure that I'll get away with it without worrying whether or not the manuscript will be returned for major revision. (Rank do have its privileges, sometimes.)

What follows is a bit of information on collections of some of the finest work ever to be done in the comic strip field. Please remember that many of the greatest comic book artists of all time flourished in this medium, free of many of the restrictions of the comic book industry of the time, and that virtually all comic book artists were inspired by the work they saw in strips.

Comics Revue is a monthly magazine that contains a fair assortment of comic strips including Dick Moore's *Gasoline Alley*, Milton Caniff's *Steve Canyon*, Dik Browne's *Hagar the Horrible* and our own Stan Lee's *Spiderman* (by the way, who does draw this one, Stan?). *Flash Gordon* (Barry's, not Raymond's), *Secret Agent Corrigan* (Evans', not Williamson's), *Latigo, Bloom County* and *O'Neill* fill out a pretty packed package. It is a little high-priced at $2.50, considering that it is all newsprint and black & white.

Nemo, the classic comic library, has its ups and downs. Sometimes the work is magnificent and other times it is dull and uninspiring. The issue in front of me has an entire story sequence of Will Gould's *Red Barry*, which alone justifies the toll. This one is edited by Rick Marschall, who certainly knows his strips.

Kitchen Sink, long known for underground comics, publishes two of the best ongoing strip reprints being done today. Unfortunately, they are both rather overpriced. Even Will Eisner's *Spirit* may not be worth $1.95 admission for only 32 black & white, newsprint pages. Milton Caniff's *Steve Canyon* may well be worth almost any price to some, but most will have to question $4.95 for 72 black & white pages of reprint material. There is a long *Canyon* sequence along with an excellent segment of *Scorchy Smith* by Noel Sickles, introduced by our own Ron Goulart.

Ken Pierce may be the most prolific producer of comic strip reprint books in America today. *COMICS FEATURE'S* Max Allan Collins has introduced two volumes of *Mike Hammer*, an excellent strip written by Mickey Spillane and drawn by Ed Robbins. This same publisher also has collections of *Phantom, Abbey and Slats, Alley OOP, Cisco Kid, The Spirit, Lady Luck, Axe, Amanda, Danielle* and *Modesty Blaise*.

New to this area of publishing, but working fast to rival Pierce is Steve Schanes' Blackthorne. He is already the proud parent of tomes devoted to *Dick Tracy, Gasoline Alley, Orphan Annie, On Stage* and a number of others.

Yet another prolific member of the old guard comic strip reprinters is the Pacific Comics Club/Tony Raiola. His latest books, however, are co-published with Pierce. Frank Robbins' *Johnny Hazard* now has six volumes out, co-published in this fashion as part of the U.S. Classics Series.

Dragon Lady Press has just thrown its hat in the ring with three different series of collections. *Classic Adventure Strips* is priced at $2.95, with the first edition on white paper but then shifting to the usual newsprint format with the second. The first issue offers *King of the Royal Mounted* and *Mandrake*. There is also a series entitled the *Best of the Chicago Tribune* which begins with an offering of *On Stage*. The third series is a group of one-shots priced at $6.95—the first two presenting sequences from *King of the Royal Mounted* and *Red Ryder*. CF

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Comics Revue—Rick Norwood, P.O. Box 1762, Wayne, NJ 07470
Nemo—Fantagraphics, 707 Camino Manzanas, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
Kitchen Sink—No. 2 Swamp Road, Princeton, WI 54966
Ken Pierce—P.O. Box 332, Park Forest, IL 60466
Blackthorne—786 Blackthorne Ave., El Cajon, CA 92020
Tony Raiola/Pacific Comics—P.O. Box 14361, Long Beach, CA 90803
Dragon Lady Press—200 Queen St. W., Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Comics Consumer Guide

MARVEL COMICS

SHIPPING NOVEMBER 5

Cloak and Dagger 5—Mantlo/Shoemaker/Austin. Detective O'Riley is transformed into a new heroine/villainess, Vendetta.

Daredevil 228—Miller/Mazzucchelli/Mazzucchelli. The decline of Matt Murdock, the absence of Daredevil and the triumph of the Kingpin.

The New Mutants 37—Claremont/ Wilshire / Sienkiewicz/Wilshire. The New Mutants versus the Beyonder . . . to the death.

Squadron Supreme 7—Gruenwald/J. Buscema/DeLaRosa. Limited Series.

The Thing 33—Carlin/Wilson. Battleaxe and Grappler.

Web of Spider-Man 12—David/S. Buscema/Beachum. Second half of two-parter as Peter Parker becomes a celebrity.

The West Coast Avengers 6—Englehart / Milgrom / Sinnott. Morbius assists against Belthauzer, the Cat Guardian.

Conan the King 33—Kraar/Docherty/Nichols. "Day of Wrath": Conan's children, Radegund and Taurus, are kidnaped as part of a power struggle.

Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe 4—Sanderson/Gruenwald/ assorted artists/Byrne/Rubinstein. Limited series. Covering from Dr. Strange to Gee.

Marvel Superspecial 39: Santa Claus—Jacobson/Springer. Adaptation of the major motion picture starring Dudley Moore and John Lithgow.

Moonshadow 6—DeMatteis/ Kent Williams (guest illustrator). Direct sales only, limited series.

Swashbucklers 5—Mantlo/Isherwood/Isherwood. Direct sales only.

Peter Parker 6—Skeates/Armstrong/Albelo.

Planet Terry 12—Manak/Kremer/ Roettcher.

SHIPPING NOVEMBER 12

Alpha Flight 32—Mantlo/Bogdanov/Talaoc. Heather becomes the new Vindicator.

The Amazing Spider - Man 274—DeFalco/Frenz/Rubinstein/ Frenz. Continues story begun in "Amazing Spider-Man 273."

Captain America 315—Gruenwald/Neary/Janke. The death of the Porcupine.

Dazzler 42—Goodwin/Chadwick/Gulce/Chadwick/Guice. Final issue, resolving all plot lines.

Firestar 1—DeFalco/Wilshire/Wilshire. Limited series. New Mutants, X-Men, White Queen, Hellfire Club and the introduction of a new character into the Marvel Universe. Note: Firestar is a regular on the popular *Spider-Man and his Amazing Friends* cartoon.

Groo the Wanderer 13—Aragones with Evanier. Direct sales only.

Indiana Jones 34—Grant/Ditko/ Bulanadi/Pollard. Concluding the amulet storyline. the amulet storyline.

Micronauts 16—Gillis/Kelly Jones/ Bulanadi/Kelly Jones. The last Acroyear story.

Power Pack 20—Simonson/McLeod. New Mutants & Power Children vs. Demon Wolves.

Vision/Scarlet Witch 6—Englehart/ Howell/Mooney. Limited series. Dr. Strange, Crystal, Quicksilver, Magneto, Sub-Mariner and Captain America in a continuing story that will climax with the birth of the witch's child.

Fantastic Four Index 4—Cover by Pollard.

Savage Sword of Conan 121—Yakata/Nebres/Larkin.

The One 4—Veitch (writer/artist). Direct sales only. Limited series.

Ewoks 6—Manak/Kremer/D'Agostino.

Wally the Wizard 12

SHIPPING NOVEMBER 19

Avengers 265—Stern/Buscema/ Palmer. "Eve of Destruction."

Balder the Brave 3—Simonson/S. Buscema/Simonson. Frost Giants. Balder gets new powers. Ties in with *Thor 365.*

Conan the Barbarian 180—Owsley/ J. Buscema/Camp.

Eternals 6—Gillis / S. Buscema / Buscema / Pollard. Limited series. Continuing the definitive story of the Eternals as they are betrayed by Thena, the Deviants stand on the edge of total victory, and Kro discovers that his life hangs by a thread.

G.I. Joe 45—Hama/Whigham/ Mushyns/Hama/Zeck/Beatty.

Incredible Hulk 317—Byrne (writer/penciller)/Williams. Bruce asks Betty to marry him.

Marvel Tales 185—Lee/Romita/ Esposito. Reprint.

Power Man/Iron Fist 122—Owsley/ Bright/Acerno/Bright.

The Punisher 3—S. Grant/Zeck/ Beatty/Zeck/Zimmelman. Limited series.

Solomon Kane 4—Macchio / Mignola / Williamson. Swashbuckling adventure with one of Robert E. Howard's heroes.

X-Men 203—Claremont/Romita Jr./Williamson/Romita Jr. X-Men vs. Beyonder.

Marvel Saga 4—Sanderson/Frenz/Layton.

Marvel Fanfare 25—Moench/Broderick/Breeding/Broderick. Continuing the return of *Weirdworld.* Plus a portfolio by Dave Sim.

Get Along Gang 6—Manak/Costanza/Roettcher.

Muppet Babies 6—Kay/Post/Severin.

Royal Roy 6—Gerberg/Kremer/ D'Agostino.

SHIPPING NOVEMBER 26

Elfquest 8—Wendy and Richard Pini. Reprint.

Fantastic Four 228—Byrne (writer/pencils)/Sinnott. Cover by Byrne/Sinnott. *Secret Wars II* tie-in. Explains how Dr. Doom was in first *Secret Wars* series.

Iron Man 204—O'Neil/Bright/Akin & Garvey. Cover by Ryan/Akin & Garvey. Conclusion of Madame Masque/Bethany Cabe bodyswitch storyline.

Guide

Peter Parker 112—David/Beachum. "Yes, Virginia"—offbeat Xmas story. Guest villain: Santa Claus.

Sectaurs 5—Mantlo/Geiger/Del Beato.

Star Wars 104—Duffy/Martin/Nichols. Cover by Nichols.

Thor 365—Simonson (writer/artist) Cover by Simonson. A new ruler is chosen for Asgard while Thor remains trapped as a frog. Ties in with *Balder 3*.

Transformers 14—Budlansky/Perlin/Gordon. Cover by Herb Trimpe.

X-Factor 2—Layton/Guice. Cover by Guice. Beast is kidnapped for genetic experiments.

Marvel Team-Up Index 3—Olshevsky. Wraparound cover by Pollard. Covers issues 24—50.

Secret Wars II 9—Shooter/Milgrom/Leialoha. Cover by Milgrom/Leialoha. Double-sized last issue guest-starring virtually everyone in the Marvel Universe.

Doctor Who 18—Parkhouse/Gibbons. Cover by Gibbons.

Savage Tales 3—Blood-and-guts action in the Rambo vein, by Trimpe, Severin, Jungkuntz, Waller, Golden et al.

Coyote 18—Englehart/Truog. Final issue. Direct sales only.

Six from Sirius 2—Moench/Gulacy. Jaskosa Lone and his team, while awaiting deportation (and probably death) realize the very thing the Sirius Swarm has been searching for—the gateway into another dimension. Direct sales only. Limited series.

Timespirits 8—Perry/Yeates. Last issue. Direct sales only.

Epic Illustrated 34—Cover by Arthur Suydam. Last issue.

Care Bears 3—Kay/Post/Edleman. "Blue Who".

DC COMICS

SHIPPING NOVEMBER 12

DC Comics Presents 91 (Superman and Capt. Comet)—Boldman/Swan. Captain Comet turns villain and Brain Storm turns hero.

Best of DC Digest 70 (Binky & Buddies)—Various/Various/Scarpelli & Goldberg/Goldberg. Teenage humor.

Justice League of America 248—Conway/McDonell/Wray/McDonell & Wray.

Crisis on Infinite Earth 12—Finale where everything comes together and the DC Universe begins anew!. Limited Series. Last issue.

Fury of Firestorm 45—Conway/Tuska/Machlan/Kayanan & Giordano.

Hex 7—Fleisher/Texeira.

Tales of the Teen Titans 63—Wolfman/Perez/Tanghal. The Titans continue to fight their dark sides—nightmares manifested by the Trigon-possessed Raven!

Legionnaires Three 2—Giffen & Newell/Colon/Kesel/Colon & Kesel. The Legionnaires fight for the life of Baby Graym in the ruins of Legion Headquarters 2000 years in the future.

Mask 4—Fleisher/Chen/De Beato/Chen & Del Beato. Last

Vigilante 27—Kupperberg/Cowan/Magyar/Kubert.

The Outsiders 5—Barr/Aparo/Aparo/Aparo. The Outsiders relive Charles Dickens' classic as they show a gangleader the true Spirit of Christmas. Direct sales only.

SHIPPING NOVEMBER 19

Batman 393—Moench/Gulacy/Gulacy/Gulacy. Two-part tale pitting Batman against Russian spies and an agent called "The Cossack."

Hawkman Special 1—Isabella/Howell/Howell & Giordano. Limited series.

Superman 417—Maggin/Swan.

Star Trek 24—Duane/Sutton/Villagran/Sutton & Wray.

G.I. Combat 282 (The Mercenaries)—Kanigher/Glanzman/Glanzman/Kubert. New format, lower price.

Aquaman 2—Pozner/Hamilton / Montano / Hamilton & Giordano. In an undersea civilization, Aquaman finds himself sentenced to death.

'Mazing Man 3—Rozakis/De Stefano/Kesel/De Stefano & Kesel.

Omega Men 36—Klein/McManus/?/McManus. Direct sales only.

The Legion of Super-Heroes 20—Levitz/La Rocque/Mahlstedt/La Rocque & Mahlstedt. The Legion vs. an entire moving planet. Direct sales only.

Shadow of the Batman 4 (wrparound cover)— Englehart/Rogers/Austin/Rogers. Direct sales only. Reprint. Limited series.

Frost & Fire Graphic Novel— Bates/Colan/McPheeters/Sienkiewicz/Ray Bradbury (adaptation). Eight days after being born on a world of frost & fire, he'd die an old man, unless . . .

SHIPPING NOVEMBER 26

Swamp Thing 46—Moore/Bissette/Totleben/Bissette & Totleben. The truth behind the "American Gothic" revealed in this *Crisis* tie-in.

Batman and the Outsiders 31—Barr/Davis/Davis/Davis.

Green Lantern 198—Englehart/Staton/Patterson. Major changes for Hal Jordan in this double-sized *Crisis* tie-in issue.

Warlord 103—Fleisher/Bingham/Marcos/Grell. Morgan's encounter with a night creature brings up serious questions about Shakira's past.

Blue Devil 22—Cohn & Mishkin/Kupperberg/Magyar/Cullins & Martin.

Who's Who in the DC Universe 13—Wein/Various/Cullins & Giordano. L is for Legion—Heroes, Villains, HQs, Substitutes and the Lightning family.

Booster Gold 2—Jurgens/Jurgens/DeCarlo/Jurgens & DeCarlo. It's Mindancer and Blackguard vs. Booster Gold and Skeets as they battle to a finish.

Demon 3—Wagner/Wagner. Only the Demon stands between Gotham City and death by sorcery.

Infinity, Inc. 24—Thomas/McFarlane & Harris/DeZuniga. The Star-Spangled Kid and Jonni Thunder battle crooks from past and future. Direct sales only.

SHIPPING DECEMBER 3

Tales of the Legion of Super-Heroes 333—Levitz/Lightle/Mahlstedt/Lightle & Mahlstedt. The five lost Legionnaires must destroy a world, but what price will they pay?

Action 557—Fleming/Giffen.

Detective 560—Moench/Colan/B. Smith/Colan & Giordano.

The All - Star Squadron 55—Thomas / Jones / Colletta / Jones. Firebrand and DC's greatest western heroes battle the forces of the Anti-Monitor in this *Crisis* tie-in.

V 14—Bates/Infantino/DeZuniga/Bingham.

Deadman 1 (four issue series)—Heifer/Garcia Lopez/Garcia Lopez/Garcia Lopez. When a shot rings out in the circus tent, can a Deadman die again?

DC Challenge 5—Barr/Gibbons/Farmer/Gibbons. Across the multiverse: Blackhawk, Dr. Fate, Peter Canon . . . Thunderbolt. Limited series.

The Oz/Wonderland Wars 3—Cavalleri/Birdwell/Lay/Lay/Lay. Last issue.

comics could become preachy and socially relevant. Others either disagreed with the implied politics or found the series too opportunistic. The one which drew the most objection was issue 83. The villain looks just like Spiro Agnew while the victim he manipulates is a small child who looks like Richard Nixon! Like I said, these stories aren't subtle. In many respects they draw influence from the then-new form of Underground Comics.

Issues 85 and 86 are the famous drug issues. Drug addiction is portrayed in all its ugliness. The controversy is that the story deals with the attractiveness of drugs, the pressures children face in modern times. It attempts to portray the complexity of the issue. In doing so it alienates anti-drug people by suggesting that it isn't as black and white as they believe and alienates the pro-drug forces by suggesting that drugs are a bad solution to escape complex problems. The underground press singled out the two issues and criticized them for their anti-drug stance. Underground Comics portray drug use as the key to problem-solving and an acceptable form of recreation.

Issue 87 introduces another alternate Green Lantern, John Stewart, a black man (who has recently become Hal Jordan's replacement). Like Green Arrow, who walks through these issues as a man with a chip on his shoulder, John Stewart is at first drunk with power but shows that his rough style is somehow correct. Some fans, then and now, call him Black Lantern.

The handwriting was on the wall when issue 88 appeared as a reprint issue. With number 89 the book was cancelled. It was the thirteenth issue in the O'Neill/Adams run, one of the best.

Cancelled in 1972, the title was revived in 1976 as. . . *Green Lantern/Green Arrow!* For a few issues, D.C. actually put a "The Award-Winning Title" blurb on the top of it. Fans (myself included) wrote in pointing out that the new writer/artist team were not the ones who won the awards. The style of the stories is nothing like the O'Neil/Adams tales which won the awards. The blurb was soon dropped.

Green Arrow exited the title soon after. It became much like a Marvel comic in that it seemed to constantly search for direction. Each new writer tried a different approach.

Artists during the present revival include Joe Staton, Mike Grell, Keith Pollard and others. Even Gil Kane returned for a fill-in on issue 156.

Issue 162, written by Mike Barr and drawn by Keith Pollard and Rick Hoberg, features the controversial sequence in which G.L. is trapped on a spaceship by a mad computer while a young boy is sucked out of an airlock into space where he explodes. The repulsive cover is an obvious take-off on the horrific Wally Wood cover on *Weird Science 19* (from 1953). The furor was aroused by the death of a child. One feels that an adult has a fighting chance while a child is a helpless victim.

The same issue features a tale of the Green Lantern Corps written by Todd Klein and drawn by Dave Gibbons. The plot is nothing more than "The Sorceror's Apprentice" done Green Lantern style, but Gibbons' art is superb. Early this year D.C. released *Tales of the Green Lantern Corps Annual* number one. With a cover and forty-page story drawn by G.L. veteran Gil Kane, it marks the first and only Green Lantern annual in the history of the title.

As mentioned earlier, John Stewart has replaced Hal Jordan as the ring-wielder. At present, Guy Gardner also has a ring.

The future of *Green Lantern* holds even more changes. These tie in with the *Crisis On Infinite Earths* series. The most notable is that the Guardians of the Universe will break into two opposing factions. They will finally wind up in suspended animation, removing them from the picture entirely. The Green Lantern Corps will divide into various teams who will carry out their duties without the almost god-like supervision of the Guardians. Where the emerald light will carry Green Lantern remains to be seen.

GF

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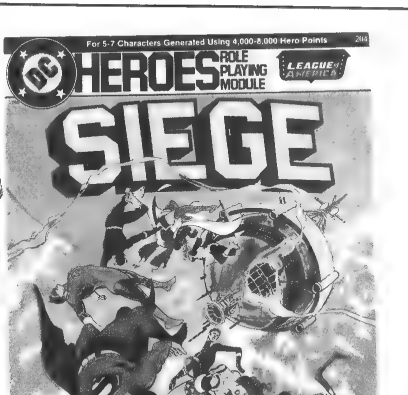
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

THE FIRST DC HEROES ROLE-PLAYING MODULE



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NEW VILLAINS

Villains and Vigilantes has a new set of villains. This time they're from Troy Christensen, who wrote the V&V scenario *The Devil's Domain*. Like its predecessor, *Most Wanted Volume I* (written by V&V author Jack Herman), the third volume purports to be taken from the files of *CHESS*, the government organization which keeps track of super-powered criminals.

The villains are an interesting lot, from the boyish Tomcat to the awkward Armada (how many supervillains have you run into who look like half a Spanish galleon and use demi-culverins as hand weapons?) to the very deadly Mind Mauler. The book also provides two different sets of thugs and three criminal organizations.

Translations are provided for *Superworld* and *Champions* gamemasters. I feel an echo when I read the translations since I played a part in writing both of them. On the other hand, I feel really-comfortable using them. Both systems work to provide interesting villains for *Champions* players who are used to fighting the foes coming out of old Enemies books.

This leaves us with one question: What happened to *Most Wanted Volume 2*? Actually, I think I know. When Fantasy Games Unlimited accepts a manuscript they title it and give it a product number before handing it to an artist to illustrate. Apparently Pat Zircher (whose ever-improving work is showing up in both *Champions* and *Villains and Vigilantes* projects) got his assignment finished before the artist who was doing *Most Wanted Volume 2*. Publisher Scott Bizar had no interest in sitting on a volume. In another six months, when both are on the stands, no one will know the difference anyway, right?

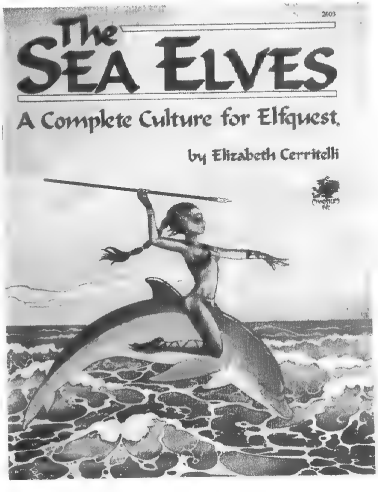
SIEGE

Siege, the first "*DC Heroes* Role Playing Module" from Mayfair games, was written by Jerry Epperson, who has also worked for TSR, the makers of *Marvel Super Heroes*. This module starts the game off with a bang. It uses the Justice League of America from about two years ago, when such extremely tough heroes as Superman, Green Lantern, Wonder Woman, Firestorm and Zatanna were regulars. These are joined by Flash and Red Tornado, neither of whom are lightweights.

While the scenario makes very inventive use of old DC villains such as Power Parasite and Killer Frost, the main focus is on a new crew created using the character rules in *DC Heroes*. This is an aspect of *DC Heroes* that one rarely sees duplicated in the *Marvel Super Heroes* game. Perhaps Marvel doesn't want to encourage their game's players to make up their own characters. The folks at Mayfair do not seem to be under any such constraint.

In the post-Crisis-on-Infinite-Earth world we live in by the time you read this column, the module is interesting in that it uses the multiple earths as a rationale for the villains' existence. It seems they come from Earth Two, where the Crime Cartel wants information on super heroes who occasionally appear out of nowhere to aid the Justice Society.

Since I have already given away one possible surprise for the player of this module, I won't go any further. It is well put together and bids fair to be a challenge to those who want to play some of the megapowers in the DC universe.



PINI'S OWN RENDITION OF THIS NEW RACE OF ELVES—THEY NEVER APPEARED IN THE ORIGINAL ELFQUEST!

THE SEA ELVES

And now for something completely different. Elizabeth Cerritelli first came to my attention when I read her short story, "The Siege of Suncliff Island," in the first and (so far) only issue of *Yearnings*, the official Elfquest fanzine. This introduced the concept of Sea Elves. I used them as a possible race of elves in the World of Two Moons.

Seeing mention of her story in the game (I believe in giving credit where it is due), Elizabeth wrote to me about the depiction of the Sea Elves. A correspondence grew up, resulting in my request for more Sea Elf and general Elf material for future Elfquest publications.

A few submissions became a torrent and Elizabeth became a major contributor to the *Elfquest Companion*, which I reviewed previously.

Originally, Elizabeth's contribution was to be much larger. But after I left the Chaosium, the powers that be decided to take all of Elizabeth's Sea Elf material and make a seperate book of it. Chaosium asked Elizabeth for yet more material, which she supplied. The result is now on the stands.

The book features the history of the people, sample islands, special magic powers developed by the sea-dwellers, their special relationship with dolphins (no, no one mated with a dolphin), descriptions of the significant flora and fauna of the islands and three interesting scenarios for sea elves or those elves who might have contact with sea elves.

In all, it is a good addition to the "alternate" World of Two Moons established by the Elfquest game. No one should assume that Sea Elves actually exist in the world as described by the Pinis, but, if this book is any indication of what they would be like, they should. CF

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Superworld and *Elfquest* Chaosium, Inc., P.O. Box 6302, Albany, CA. 94706
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OZARK IKE WAS VERY ILLUSTRATIVE AND VERY SEXY!

BULLETIN
TH' FATFIELD-WYATT FEUD ENDED IN THE BARKIN, DOGS HAVE BEEN NOW WE HIM...
SET TH DATE!
(SCHOOL'S) TO STAGGEN A CEMETERY, A THREE MILES FATFIELD
MAN, NERVES CAN'T STAND AN' IN'S AN' AN' AN'

years previously and reassemble them into comic book form. Staff artists at the publishers would usually do the cover . . . the only cover I did was that one book for Dell . . . and whatever extra art that was needed to hold the stories together. Not an ideal situation, since the writing was meant to be read on a day to day basis, and the drawing was not done with color in mind. That made for a lot of muddy spots where color was laid over pen line shading and cross hatch. But that's the way it had to be done as I was busy enough just producing the dailies and writing the Sunday pages.

Collins: How much influence did sports cartooning have on your approach to *Ozark Ike*?

Gotto: Sports cartooning was a definite influence on my style, since I drew many of them for Nashville papers before even thinking of creating a strip.

Collins: How about specific influences?

Gotto: Cartoonists I've most admired were Alex Raymond, Burris Jenkins Jr., Willard Mullin, and others too numerous to mention.

Collins: What about Al Capp?

Gotto: I've always admired Capp's handling of exaggerated action. But most of all his ability to keep his continuity moving at a fast pace. In the last 20 or 25 years, though, Capp has been involved in so many other activities that I presume he's had to rely on assistants to grind out the strip. Incidentally, I've never met Al Capp, but I've known Fred Lasswell for 30 years. And Alex Raymond I knew briefly before his untimely death. In my opinion Alex was the best illustrator who ever appeared on the comic pages.

Collins: How much work did you do for *The Sporting News*?

Gotto: I probably did a hundred or more cartoons in the late '50s and early '60s. Since then they have drifted to an almost exclusive use of photos.

Collins: When did the famous Uncle Sam "Play Ball!" cartoon first appear?

Gotto: 1962. For several years it was used annually for their season-opening issue, and appeared again in 1972 with color added. It appeared on the front page, as did many other of my cartoons for them.

Collins: What besides *The Sporting News* has occupied your time since leaving syndicated strip cartooning?

Gotto: I've been involved with commercial art, book illustrations. Also, in 1961 I won a $1000 contest for designing the New York Mets emblem. These days I'm just doing enough commercial artwork to pay the rent. . . and playing a lot of very bad golf.

Collins: You know, my wife and I saw an

COTTON WOODS
SOMEBODY ELSE IS WAITING FOR COTTON OVER AT THE PLAYERS ENTRANCE!
HEY, AL...
WHERE'S YO GAL, CANDIE LANE?
AND IN A FLYING SAUCER, NO DOUBT! NOW CUT OUT THE CLOWNING UNTIL WE TELL YOU WHY WE'RE GETTING OUT OF THIS CUBICLE!
T RAY GOTTO
BUT CANNIE'S A-STANDIN' RIGHT ABOUT SIXES 'N' GONE!!
BEEP, SEEING AS HOW I LOOSES CY, AND YOU'LL WING UP AS AN UMPIRE!

AFTER OZARK IKE, GOTTO CREATED THE LESS-SUCCESSFUL COTTON WOODS AND THE UNSOLD HEAVEN AND HELLER—THE LATTER WITH COLUMNIST COLLINS.

old movie the other night, *The Blue Dahlia* with Alan Ladd and Veronica Lake, and Barb took one look at Veronica Lake and said, "Isn't that Ozark Ike's girlfriend?"

Gotto: Well now, I never saw Veronica Lake in a film, but I must have seen publicity pictures of her in the early '40s when Dinah was created. Since her hairstyle was unique, and since that is what you strive for when creating a character, I was probably influenced by her appearance at the time.

Collins: Speaking of Dinah, did you ever get any flack from the syndicate or editors or readers because of your uninhibited and, let's say, lusty portrayal of her and the other voluptuous women in the strip?

Gotto: As to censorship, there was apprehension by editors concerning large breasts, and numerous indignant letters from readers. But I decided, for the best interest of the strip, to ignore them. However, Al Capp and Daisy Mae should be given the credit for blazing the trail in this regard.

Gotto: Oh, I used to roll out of bed after about four hours sleep, crawl to the drawing board, and stay with it till I ran out of gas, with interruptions for meals (while reading the newspapers), checking the mail, and maybe a walk on the beach. This was seven days a week, and no vacations since I was never far enough ahead. A number of times I spent three straight days and two nights at the board without sleep. Today I couldn't put together half that many hours without getting groggy. But even now I prefer to work all night with a few hours sleep in the daytime.

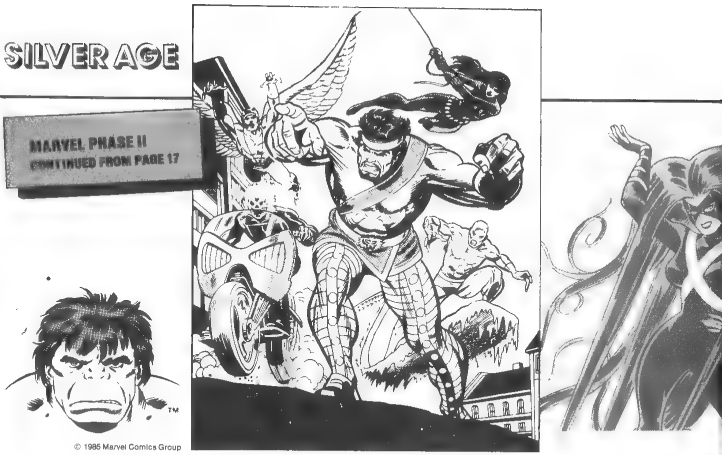
Collins: Any closing thoughts on *Ozark Ike*?

Gotto: Well, in retrospect I guess I was just lucky to come up with *Ozark Ike* when readers could still remember and relate to characters like Shoeless Joe Jackson, Dizzy Dean and the fiction of Ring Lardner. Whereas now almost all big leaguers are college grads. . . and every remote shack in the backwoods has a tv set. . . and the era of the hillbilly is dead, except for *Li'l Abner* and *Snuffy Smith*. And I must say I'm amazed that someone is interested in something I produced more than twenty years ago.

But that's what makes *Comics Feature* readers unique! CF

MAX ALLAN COLLINS WRITES THE DICK TRACY *COMIC STRIPS,* MS. TREE *AND LOADS OF DETECTIVE NOVELS.*

SILVER AGE



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Gerber made an art of bending and twisting the established universe into unexpected shapes and merging different genres. He used dream sequences, strange physical transformations and tongue-in-cheek plot shenanigans to give the series an air of unreality. His scripting was crisp and effective, his characters distinct and well-realized. His version of the Hulk, in particular, was the most delightful ever, blending childlike innocence and dim-witted tenderness with savage strength. Eventually the monster adopted a motherless fawn and named it Bambi, thrusting responsibility for its care to his "Smart friend, Magician" (i.e. Dr. Strange; his custom of giving his own descriptive names to everyone he met was one of the great charms of Gerber's Hulk). Gerber's most ambitious work on *Defenders* came in an eleven-issue sequence centering on the Headmen, a villainous crew of old monster-story characters united by their deformed heads (*Def.* 31, Jan. 1976). The group's plot involves switching Nighthawk's brain with that of one of their members, but Dr. Strange retaliates by transferring the villain's mind to Bambi's body, thus starting a carnival of "musical minds." Onto the scene comes an EST-like cult of self-deprecators who wear clown masks and call themselves Bozos, a band of interplanetary meddlers who want to bring peace to mankind by obliterating all our passion and folly and a growing cast of visiting heroes and villains. By the conclusion, entitled "World Gone Sane," so many powers are uniting to turn back the rising tide of Bozoism that Gerald Ford finds himself sitting on an asteroid with Dr. Strange (*Def Annual 1*, 1976).

Gerber left soon after and although the quality plunged under his various successors, he had given *The Defenders* enough momentum to remain popular for some time, albeit with different members. He was aided by the long tenure of penciller Sal Buscema who, although exhibiting little flair, competently conveyed the stories and concepts.

Most of the other new series of the period began with promise, but all lacked the distinctive flair of an Englehart, a McGregor or a Gerber, and all were immeasurably harmed by frequent and jarring changes of direction and personnel. The first of them, *The Inhumans*, kicking off *Amazing Adventures* (Aug. 1970), led with four issues of rapid fire Kirby action, made an about-face to a troubled, humanistic approach under Roy Thomas' writing and Neal Adams' stylized but realistic art, then ended after two issues by Gerry Conway and Mike Sekowsky. The back-up strip, about the acrobatic heroine Black Widow, lasted only eight issues under four writers and three pencillers. In *Astonishing Tales* (Aug. 1970), Ka-Zar, a Tarzan-like ex-pulp character from a prehistoric jungle land hidden in the Antarctic, began under Lee and Kirby, shifted to a fantastical tone under Conway and Barry Smith, then moved to New York City and into a semi-relevant phase under Mike Friedrich and diverse artists. The backup strip, *Dr. Doom*, the first series to star an outright villain, lasted only seven issues but nevertheless featured three writers and two pencillers.

More Silver Age characters were given their own series. The mysterious golden-skinned messiah called Him, who had been scientifically spawned in *Fantastic Four* and attained a sort of cosmic stature in *Thor*, now became Adam Warlock, a Christ-figure on the alternate Earth created by the godlike scientist known as the High Evolutionary (*M. Premiere* 1, April 1972). Roy Thomas wrote a highly literary and thoughtful origin story, full of Biblical parallels. Gil Kane added his dynamic art and Dan Adkins his fine inking, and by the time *Warlock* began its own title (Aug. 1972) it showed tremendous promise. But when Mike Friedrich took over the writing and Bob Brown the art soon after, the Christ-figure was recast in a more standard superhero role and rambled to early discontinuation.

Shortly after, *Captain Marvel* returned from cancellation (*CM* 22, Sept. 1972). This was a series with many ingenious ideas in its favor: Roy Thomas, for example, had paid sly tribute to the Golden Age Captain Marvel by having his Kree warrior share the same space/time with Marvel's ubiquitous

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teenager, Rick Jones—so that one was always banished to the "Negative Zone" while the other was on Earth. But weak writing by Conway, Marv Wolfman and Mike Friedrich, along with sloppy art by Wayne Boring, obscured all the cleverness. The presence, even preeminence, of Rick Jones also soaked the stories in excess emotion and hip dialogue: "A warm, loving chick shafted me last night, and that *bums* me—*bad*, man—BAAD!" (*CM* 25, March 1973).

During the same period of giving minor heroes a chance at the limelight, Mike Friedrich and Herb Trimpe brought back Ant-Man (*M. Feature* 4, July 1972). It was an unsuccessful revival of an unimportant hero, and testified more than anything else to Marvel's unwillingness to let any piece of its past continuity fade away. Next Dr. Strange was revived. But more on him another time.

Not all the new series featured old Marvel characters. Four titles sprang from the tail end of the relevance fad. Foremost among these was *Hero for Hire*. The protagonist is a tough black convict named Lucas, tormented by vicious prison guards. When given an opportunity to undergo a medical experiment in exchange for a parole, an assassination attempt by one of the "screws" backfires, causing the experiment to grant Lucas tremendous strength and steel-like skin. He escapes, but then determines to go straight and work secretly to clear his name. Having no job skills, he uses his great strength to become a strong-arm for hire, calling himself Luke Cage (*HH* 1, June 1972). Locating in the inner city, his assignments revolve around pimps, racketeers and ghetto parasites. Almost invariably, Cage finds himself on the side of the angels.

The first four issues of *Hero for Hire* were superbly written by Archie Goodwin, who faithfully preserved the opportunism and moral ambivalence of the character. His scripting was hard and tense, with convincing use of whatever black slang the Code permitted. His artistic partners were George Tuska, with appropriately ugly human portraits, and inker Billy Graham, a young black who evinced a special sensitivity to the subject matter, later assisting with the writing. After Goodwin's departure, the strip's quality dipped under Steve Englehart, then collapsed under Tony Isabella. To forestall cancellation, Cage was renamed Power Man and made into a more standard superhero (*Power Man* 17, Feb. 1974). This would work for eleven years, although Iron Fist had to be added to strengthen the book.

Shortly after Cage started, Marvel made a bid for a socially conscious female audience, with three comics featuring liberated women as protagonists. *The Claws of the Cat* starred a tough superheroine with athletic ability like Daredevil's and a set of sharp claws for weapons. Her adventures boasted a female writer, Linda Fite, and artist, Marie Severin (*CC*1, Nov. 1972). *Night Nurse* (Nov. 1972) was about the tribulations of a modern working woman in a realistic setting. *Shanna the She-Devil* (Dec. 1972) was a committed veterinarian who, after seeing man's cruelty to animals, ran off to Africa to emulate Tarzan. All three strips were short-lived.

Simultaneously, a low-key effort began on Marvel's part to revive some of their past genres. From 1970 to 1972 several comics were created to reprint western, war and, particularly, monster stories. A new war title, *Combat Kelly and the Deadly Dozen*, and a western, *The Gunhawks*, were created in 1972, both attempting a cynical modern look at historical violence. Both promptly failed. Several unsuccessful efforts were also made to revive anthology horror comics. The reprints soon failed as well.

Of the titles in these genres, the most illustrative of the changing times was *Red Wolf*, about a semi-mystical American Indian hero in the Old West, introduced in *Marvel Spotlight* 1 (Nov. 1971). With a colorful milieu, lush quiet art by veteran Syd Shores and an entertaining story by Gardner Fox, Red Wolf was appealing enough to begin his own comic in May, 1972. This was Fox's first western comic in over a decade (since he had worked under Julius Schwartz at DC on such series as Pow-Wow Smith, about a very different Indian

"NO ONE--!"
BLAM!
THE LOUD-MOUTHED SHOT PLUS THE BLACK KID
FOR A MOMENT THERE'S NOTHING BUT SILENCE IN THE PITCH DARK CHAMBER.
THE KID
HE WAS SO AFRAID OF MY BARKING CLAWS
DESPERATELY AFRAID THAT A TOUCH
COWARD'S
SCARY
I DON'T KNOW IS I DID THE RIGHT THINGS--
ALL OUR PLANS FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT OF
WELL
WOMAN
EXCUSE ME HUMAN BEING?
OH, WHERE'S MY MANNERS--
TONIGHT--THE CATCREATS!
AND THE STARS CROWDS AND ROOFTOPS FILL UP TO THE RAILINGS
NEXT: THE HULK AND THE PUNISHER!
THE END

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hero), and he was both well and poorly suited to the material. In a field in which more and more writers were young superhero fans with scarcely any diversity to their backgrounds, Fox's experience in pulps, paperbacks and the varied comics of the past served him well. But at the same time, his light-hearted approach blended badly with the more serious treatment now demanded (especially when Red Wolf's adventures moved to present-day New York after seven issues). After issue 9 (Sept. 1973), the series, which would prove to be Fox's last, was cancelled. It marked the quiet, but not unfitting, departure of a great comic book writer who, sadly, found himself in a time no longer receptive to his talents.

The old-genre comics were not the only ones which stood on shaky ground. Very few of the titles launched in this period enjoyed truly healthy sales, and a number were quickly cancelled. But Lee could not have been unhappy with the results of his daring expansion. The fact that several of the new titles survived at all suggested that comics might yet be a vigorous medium and that, despite the troubles of 1969, there was still room for experimentation and boldness. In 1972 DC would begin responding with new creations of its own, but Marvel now had a headstart. And, partly because of that headstart, partly because of DC's difficulty in switching from the Silver Age to the new approach, Marvel had at last—in sales, number of titles and staff—made itself the equal of its venerable rival.

But Phase II was ultimately disappointing and troubling for the readers. Apart from the difficulty of keeping new projects alive, the comic book field seemed to be suffering from sudden confusion and a drastic loss of direction. Series such as *The Inhumans*, *Ka-Zar* and *Warlock* would begin as one type of comic and veer abruptly into another sort altogether. The new writers behind these and other titles, like rookies hurled from the sandlot into the big leagues, arrived on the scene ill-prepared for the demands of professionalism. Intoxicated by the new ambition of the medium, they fell prey to pretention and self-importance; the basics of storytelling were buried under self-indulgence. Even the best efforts ultimately came to naught. Creators simply would not stay put any longer. The best ideas seemed destined to dropped into less capable hands.

During this time of unrest, it was the superheroes, still the focus of the medium, who inevitably suffered the brunt of the confusion. The attempt to revive old genres was an early inkling that the powers at Marvel thought the long primacy of superheroes might be coming to an end. With the heroes struggling for survival and relevance falling to save them, it became increasingly clear that the future of the field might lie in other types of comics. Many professionals compared the beginning of the 1970s to the beginning of the 1950s, when superheroes had last lost their readership. More and more prophecies of the death of the costumed heroes were heard. Thus from 1970 to 1973 the doors were thrown open to vigilantes and barbarians, gods and jungle lords, monsters and pulp heroes, every stripe of hero and antihero, both original and adapted, in a mad scramble to find anything that would keep comics alive. CF

SERIALIZED FROM THE COMIC BOOK HEROES. *JACOBS & JONES ARE FREQUENT CONTRIBUTORS TO* NATIONAL LAMPOON.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

So far, their only effect seems to be to increase the price of an already high-priced comic. Thus a mint Golden Age book described as coming from the "Sky High" collection, for example, might sell for twice what a similar condition (but non-pedigreed) mint Golden Age would otherwise sell for.

More recently there has been a disturbing trend to try to give pedigrees to even relatively recent comics—some even just published. Thus we have comics from the last 15 to 20 years being described as "Silver Age Mile High" books, and selling for two to three times what a book in the exact same condition would otherwise sell for.

We're seeing such things as "Special Limited Editions of Autographed Issues by the Publishers" of brand new comic titles. We're seeing collectors pay an extra price for a certificate that "guarantees" that the comic is indeed part of a "special" collection.

It's one-upmanship, designer label mentality carried to its absurd conclusion in comic book collecting. In marketing circles, it's called selling the sizzle instead of the steak. Now dealers are hyping *where* a comic book *has come from* instead of *what it is*.

Very honestly, I don't mind if some collectors are stupid enough to fall for these gimmicks. Stupidity has its own way of eventually correcting itself in the marketplace. And I don't even mind a few sharp business people maximizing their profits on an already marked-up high margin item.

What really disturbs me is that it reflects an unhealthy preoccupation with an ersatz aura of collectibility.

We've already seen this happen in the coin and stamp marketplace. Stamp collectors pay a premium price for a stamp that came from, say, the collection of ex-president Franklin Roosevelt. Coin collectors trade "official" grading certificates along with their mint MS-65 silver dollars.

In effect, there is an increasing emphasis placed upon the collectible item as *object* and less interest in the book itself. We collect condition, certificates and hype instead of entertaining and enjoyable comic books.

For example, one such pedigreed comic I saw at a San Diego convention was *Fear* #1. It was on display wrapped in a Mylar bag, complete with an embossed certificate testifying to its origins. It's price: $4.

ROBIN, I SEE THAT YOU YOU HAVE BEEN USING THE BAT-CAVE'S CRIME FILES TO STORE YOUR COMICS AGAIN. . .
YES, BAT-MAN! BUT I HAVE THEM FILED UNDER THE CROOK'S NAME IN EACH ISSUE!
© 1985 DC COMICS

Friends, I have given copies of this comic away. I rejoice when I can sell a copy of *Fear* #1 (a 1970 Marvel *reprint*) for anything more than 25 cents!

Yet there it hung in a bag worth more than the book itself, sporting an official certificate issued by the dealer, hoping that some idiot would drop $4 to take it home.

It's embarrassing.

*****

One of my favorite pastimes is hearing how collectors turn up really great finds and collections. I get a vicarious thrill when someone tells me how he came across two thousand Golden Age comics at an estate sale . . . and bought them for fifty cents apiece. It gives me hope, keeps me going and makes me deliciously jealous.

Here's one story I heard last summer:

A collector from Kentucky was driving along the East Coast with his wife. Every vacation trip he always dragged the poor woman through used bookstores and antique shops looking for old comics. This summer, he promised he wouldn't do it to her again, and peace reigned in their car.

The wife was so pleased with her husband's restraint all through the trip that *she* suggested, as a reward, that they pull into a small flea market in a North Carolina coastal town.

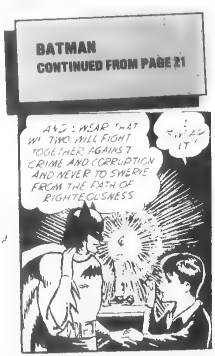
The wife picked up a penguin cookie jar for her own collection, and the collector wandered among the booths until he saw a man with one stack of recent comic books. Unable to resist, he flipped through the stack, then started to leave.

"You collect comics," the man asked. "I got some here I was saving for some regular customers. I want a buck apiece for them, though."

A box was pulled out. Inside were 93 issues of *The Human Torch, Captain America* and *Sub-Mariner* from the 1940s.

Ninety-three dollars exchanged hands—and the best vacation of his life had just been made. **CF**

MIKE BENTON is the author of *Comic Book Collecting for Fun and Profit* (Crown Publishers, $8.95, now available at your local newsstand or comic book specialty store).



Batman's origin, the inside story on "who he is and how he came to be," didn't appear until *Detective* 33 (November, 1939). In a terse two page account we are told that fifteen years ago Bruce Wayne's parents were gunned down on the street by a stickup man and that the boy vowed to dedicate his life to "warring on criminals." Having no supernatural powers, Wayne has to work at becoming a hero. He devotes years to preparing for his crimefighting career, turning himself into both a master scientist and a crackerjack athlete. Determining that he'll need a disguise capable of striking terror into the hearts of criminals, he's inspired by the intrusion of a bat into his den. "It's an omen. . . I shall become a BAT!" The origin, with a new splash panel, turned up again in *Batman* 1 (Spring, 1940).

Another major event in Batman's life was recounted in *Detective* 38 (April, 1940). He acquired a sidekick. "An exciting new figure whose incredible gymnastic and athletic feats will astound you. . . . A laughing, fighting young daredevil who scoffs at danger like the legendary Robin Hood whose name and spirit he has adopted. . . Robin the Boy Wonder." Bob Kane once explained, "In my subconscious mind I longed to be like Robin when I was his age, fighting alongside his idol Batman (or in my case, Douglas Fairbanks, Sr.). I figured Robin would appeal to all children of his age group as an identifiable person for their inner fantasies." Finger amplified, "Batman was a combination of Fairbanks and Sherlock Holmes. Holmes had his Watson. The thing that bothered me was that Batman didn't have anyone to talk to, and it got a little tiresome always having him thinking. I found as I went along Batman needed a Watson to talk to. That's how Robin came to be. Bob called me over and said he was going to put a boy in the story to identify with Batman. I thought it was a great idea." Jerry Robinson, Kane's assistant at the time, had a few more facts to add about the dynamic youth's gestation. "I thought of Batman's new partner as a sort of young Robin Hood. . . I remember plugging the name Robin against others that didn't seem quite as good," he's recalled. "Once we agreed upon the name, I suggested adapting Robin Hood's costume for the new character."

Much later Kane had some second thoughts about the addition of the Boy Wonder. "I prefer Batman operating alone and mysteriously, like the Shadow," he told an interviewer in the early 1970s. "Before Robin he was that way, and his style changed then. When Robin comes in, they begin punning and joking." Even at the time not all kid readers doted on and identified with Robin, Jules Feiffer has said, "One need only look at him to see he could fight better, play ball better, eat better and live better—for while I lived in the East Bronx, Robin lived in a mansion, and while I was trying, somehow, to please my mother—and getting it all wrong, Robin was rescuing Batman and getting the gold medals. He didn't even have to live with his mother. Robin wasn't skinny. He had the build of a middleweight, the legs of a wrestler. He was obviously an 'A' student, the center of every circle, the one picked for greatness in the crowd—God, how I hated him."

The majority of readers, though, liked the new team. Rival crimefighters were also fascinated and over the next couple years many added a boy companion to the staff—Sandy, Bucky, Roy, Speedy, Dusty etc. Batman, as noted earlier, was given his magazine in 1940, the first DC hero so honored after Superman. It began as a quarterly, jumped to bimonthly with the sixth issue and by the 1950s was a monthly. Batman and Robin also showed up in the 1940 edition of *New York World's Fair* and, thereafter, were in its successor *World's Finest*.

Why exactly did Batman and Robin succeed where so many others failed? For one thing there was the look of Bob Kane's work. His cartoony style, carried on and amplified by Robinson, fit the sort of melodramatic nighttime stories he and Finger loved to spin. "Batman's world took control of the reader," says Feiffer. "Kane's was an authentic fantasy, a genuine vision, so that however one might nit-pick the components, the end product remained an impregnable whole: gripping and original." The stories, particularly in the World War II

BAT-MAN!
THE BAT-MAN
CRIME IN REVERSE? WHY NOT? HA, HA! WHAT A JOKE THAT WOULD BE! BUT I'LL HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE FIRST...
THE BAT-MAN QUIETLY PICKS UP THE PAPER
THEY THINK THEIR MAIL-HELICOPTER IS SAFE WHEN IT'S CROSSING THE CITY TO THE AIRPORT, BUT THEY DON'T REALIZE---

Ron Goulart has had over 140 of his books published, winning awards for his mysteries, science fiction and westerns.

years, were good. Borrowing a little from O. Henry, from Damon Runyon, from the movies. And, of course, Batman and Robin came up against, as we'll see in another piece, some of the best all time villains in comics—The Joker, the Penguin, Catwoman, etc.

The puns, too, were fun, the bandlage between the crimebusting team and the crooks. Robin fighting a crook on a golf course, tossing a ball into the thug's open mouth and exclaiming, naturally, "A hole-in-one!" Batman smacking the Penguin with a handy mop and saying "This will clean away some of your hot air!" And you know that almost any specific locale was going to inspire wisecracks. During one battle with the Joker and his minions in a post office the following lines were among those heard—"That cancels you!" "You can start a stamp collection with these, Joker!" "Gangway! The mail must go through!" Any regular Forties reader can readily conjure up the pictures to go with this dialogue.

Another appeal was the gimmicks and props. The batplane and batmobile, in their various incarnations. The utility belts, which seemed to contain an endless supply of life-saving gadgets. The Batcave, which first showed up in the early 1940s, was also fascinating and was something I wouldn't have minded having under my house in place of a damp, musty basement. The cave kept expanding, growing from a garage to a garage-laboratory-trophy room.

The subsidiary characters, too, were appealing. Commissioner Gordon, who was in the saga from the very first episode, was on the dull side. But any policeman who was imaginative enough to use the bat signal had to be okay. Alfred, a very Wodehousian butler, joined on in 1943. He was a likeable fellow, whether in his original fat mode or in his later slim state.

The fact that both Batman and Robin were vulnerable, that they could be hurt or killed, added to their appeal. Though rationally you knew DC wasn't going to let Kane and crew kill off either member of its hottest team, you suspended logic and anguished over Batman's reaching the diving bell before Robin suffocated. You hoped against hope that they'd find a way out of the subterranean room before the spiked ceiling minced them.

Unlike the other heroes we've profiled in this section, Batman is still very much with us. So this account can't conclude with a rundown of his final days and last adventures. Although there are some of us who feel the real Batman hasn't been seen since...

CF

SPIDERMAN
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 50

In describing how he sees the Peter Parker of the Eighties, Tom states, "There's a lot of internal conflicts in this character and a lot of questioning of who he is and why he's doing this. There's a big difference, though, between growing and maturing and changing. Certainly I'm not the same person that I was 20 years ago. Hopefully I'm a far more mature version of that same individua ."

WHEN SPIDER-WRITERS GATHER

In order to keep the adventures of Spider-Man straight, the editor and the writers of *Amazing, Web* and *Peter Parker* get together for regular conferences

"We have regular Spider- unches," DeFalco informs, "which is where the three writers along with Jim Owsley and his assistant, Adam, get together. We discuss current continuity and story ideas for the next two or three months. Then we look and see if there's anything happening in one book which can be played off in a different book."

"As an example," David explains, "Jim Owsley pointed out that at the end of *Web* 17, David Michelinie had done a wonderful cliffhanger ending in which you literally did not know what had happened to Spider-Man. So Jim Owsley asked Tom and I if we could each do an issue of *Amazing* and *Peter Parker* which d dn't have Peter Parker in them. That way he wou dn't apparently be blown away in *Web* and then, a week or so later, he's swinging around town in *Amazing* saying 'Boy, I'm sure glad I got out of that!' In order to heighten it and leave it literally as a cliffhanger, which is difficult for a character who appears almost every week, we played off that ending in the other titles. It was no problem for me because I'm juggling so many subplots that sometimes it's diff cult to get Peter Parker into the book. Leaving him out was absolutely no problem. Both *Amazing* and *Peter Parker* will basically print the last page that appears in *Web* 17 as their last page. This brings the whole thing full circle back to *Web* at the beginning of the following month."

The writers receive copies of each other's plots each month.

"I am sent copies of the other plots as soon as they are okayed," Michelinie explains, "and copies of my plots are sent to the other writers. As soon as the stories are written and drawn, I get copies of those. I'm pretty much aware of what the other person is doing on a week-to-week basis. I call Tom DeFalco or Peter David on occasion if I'm doing something that might affect their books or might be something that they could enhance in their books.

"We had a big Spider-Meeting back in June with all the writers, pencilers and inkers. We're talking about making that an annual or semi-annual gathering. I get together with the other writers and editors every month or two and compare notes."

"In many of the cases," DeFalco continues, "we argue. Would Peter Parker do this? I'll look at what a writer wants to do and I may feel that it's out of character while they may see something that I want to do that's out of character. We butt heads on a regular basis. Sometimes, out of this, we get better stories and sometimes we don't."

"We have an editor who moderates the discussions and tells us who's right or if anybody's right. At one time, I was the editor of the books and I got to say who Spider-Man was. When I gave that up, Jim Owsley became the editor. There are some things that go on now which, in my view, don't agree with who Spider-Man is. But it's up to the editor to decide. Both the joy and the horror of writing comic books is that you put so much of yourself into the work. You get so emotionally tied to the characters that it is sometimes hard to see someone else handling Spider-Man in a different way."

But are three monthly Spider-Man comics too much to handle? David Michelinie tackled that question and observes, "While it's unique, I don't know that it's too much. All three of them are selling quite well so there are certainly enough interested people to support three books. But It does create unique problems, too. If I were editor, I would hire someone and put them on staff just to plot the books and worry about continuity and see that everything works. Then I'd hire three writers to script them from those plots. But I'm not the editor, just one of the writers. So while there are a lot of problems, they're not insurmountable." GF

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

DROIDS AND EWOK

In the case of *Droids*, multi-part stories have been done, some with four and even five chapters. In each multi-parter the droids have a new master. The *Ewok* shows are all seperate stories, but the two run together as a one-hour block Saturday mornings on ABC.

As is the case with any spinoff project involving the *Star Wars* characters, Lucasfilm has by no means just licensed out the characters and then sat back to see what happens.

"They've been very closely involved from the early concept stages on," Hersh reveals. "Understandably, these are characters that are very near and dear to them. They were created by George Lucas and their involvement is very important, so they've been very active.

"When you see the shows, you'll understand that they've been done with integrity. There is more integrity in this hour block than in anything else that's on television. They are treated seriously as films with real stories and characters that you'll care about in stories which are impressive and dramatic. There's comedy, but they're just like little movies.

"It's aimed at the basic Saturday morning audience. But we think that the show will work for all ages. If you have good stories, characters, values and old-fashioned style animation, it'll work. We think that these are the first Saturday morning shows that anyone would enjoy watching in a long time. They're not part of a kid ghetto."

BEHIND THE CREATIVE SCENES

While Nelvana is located in Canada, it also ships work out to be done by overseas animation studios. "But more of the animation for *Droids & Ewoks* was done in Canada than is typically done in North America versus what is done overseas," Hersh explains. "Besides providing a lot more supervision than is normally done, we also provided sample animation of characters, how the characters react, walk cycles and that sort of thing to establish the personalities. There's a tremendous emphasis on personalities and both of the overseas animation studios which we have worked with have come through beautifully. That's one of the things which will differentiate the series. There's actual animation acting in these shows, which heretofore was unheard of in Saturday morning. There is no character animation ordinarily done for new Saturday morning shows."

Droids was animated at Hang—Ho Studios in South Korea while *Ewoks* was done at Cuckoo's Nest in Taiwan. "Both of them have done exceptional jobs," says Hersh. "*Droids* is designed in a *Heavy Metal*-inspired style. It's got a very contemporary look with characters who are fresh and different. The look came out of that initial ten minute cartoon which we did in '78.

"*Ewoks* is a much more classic Disney look—maybe a little bit of Maxfield Parrish inspiration. It's a softer, more traditional animation look and I think that they've come very close to achieving some classic Disney-style animation."

Since *Ewoks* and *Droids* will depend only on the title characters, without any sturdy support from Luke Skywalker or Han Solo, many new characters will be appearing in the stories.

"We think we've come up with some great characters for both *Ewoks* and *Droids*," says Hersh, "plus surprise guests of characters from the *Star Wars* galaxy. If you look carefully you'll see Max Rebo in one show, a baby Jaba the Hutt in another, and there are more. So there are some pleasant surprises for those fans of the existing *Star Wars* universe, and we've created some new characters. R2D2 and C3PO have proven to be the most wonderful animation duo ever. They're just fabulous and it's surprising considering that they are robots and not characters who can be totally elastic. But in animating them we've taken a lot of license and have been very liberal in using classic animation approaches to them."

In the case of *Ewoks*, though, the approach has been much more traditional. "There are no drop-in visitors from the old galaxy who come into our *Ewoks* shows. There are some fun villains, such as Morag, a Tulgah witch, and the Duloks."

Another interesting facet of the show is its use of music, which does not borrow or reinterpret any of the classic John Williams

S ARE BOTH FAITHFUL TO THE STAR WARS UNIVERSE CREATED BY GEORGE LUCAS.

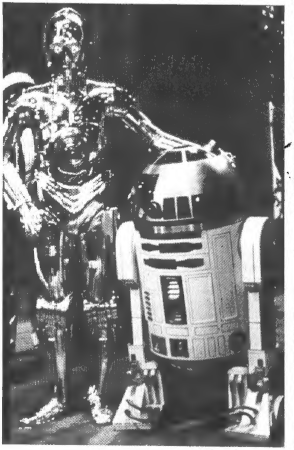
scores so prominent in the motion pictures.

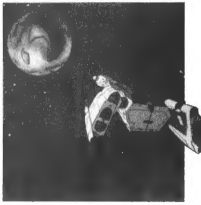
In the case of *Droids* the theme was done by Stuart Copeland of the rock group the Police, working with an artist named Derik Holt. Taj Mahal did a theme song for *Ewoks*. Scores for both shows are being composed by Toronto's Trish Cullen, who has adapted a style evocative of the theme song. But there's a very different approach in the use of music and sound effects in *Ewoks* than there is in *Droids*.

Anthony Daniels is returning as the voice of C3PO, just as he did in the films and two radio dramatizations featuring the character that were broadcast on National Public Radio.

"The primary writers who've worked on the *Ewoks* are Paul Dini (Story Editor) and Bob Carrau (who wrote the first *Ewoks* live-action tv film). Peter Sauder, who is Nelvana's head writer, story edited *Droids* and was the writer of more than half of the *Droids* scripts. Peter wrote *The Care Bears Movie* and was one of the writers of *Rock & Rule*. He has quite an extensive background. We've also done a *Droids* special which will be on in December. That was written by Ben Burtt, who is the inventive sound genius behind *Star Wars*. That will be a prime time special."

Michael Hirsh does not qualify or softpeddle his enthusiasm for the two shows. "In my opinion, the quality of animation we've produced for Saturday morning is better than prime time special quality. It'll





FILMMAKERS HARD AT WORK IN A UNIVERSE FAR, FAR AWAY. . .

set a benchmark that people will have a hard time hitting again. The stories and the characters are terrific and are probably the most unusual things done for Saturday morning television."

MODERN ANIMATION

Producers such as Ralph Bakshi (see *Comics Feature* 39) and even Nelvana itself have attempted to expand the horizons of the modern animated film, but with only mixed results.

"We were totally sympathetic to the notion of trying to widen the animation audience," Hersh explains. "We made *Rock & Rule*, which was an expensive special effects rock and roll movie. But I don't think that the way to broaden the audience is to try to broaden the audience. You broaden the audience by making a great movie which reaches more and more people because people are satisfied by it.

"When we made *Rock & Rule* we wanted to break through to reach a larger audience with an animated film and thought the way to do that would be to go for a PG rating with something everyone could watch. Unfortunately, what happened was that because *Rock & Rule* wasn't made for a specific audience, it didn't reach anyone. It tried to be too many things at once. One of the lessons we learned from that when we made our *Care Bears* movie was that we were very focused as to who our audience was. To our surprise, parents and kids like it. It works for a much larger age group, but by focusing we guarantee ourselves an audience that it works for."

Michael Hersh is very candid and specific in stating why his own effort failed and why Ralph Bakshi's earlier pioneering animated features didn't open up the field as much as was predicted, if at all. In particular, regarding the notion of the X-rated animated feature such as Bakshi's *Fritz The Cat*, Hersh states, "It didn't really broaden the audience, it narrow-cast a different audience. No one has yet created the *Star Wars* of animation in terms of a movie which is a mega-hit. I think that some of Bakshi's movies, our own *Rock & Rule, Heavy Metal* and *The Black Cauldron* are all attempts to do that, to reach a larger, wider audience. But I think that those attempts are doomed in that you have those significant successes when you concentrate more on the story and the entertainment rather than thinking of trying to reach everyone. It becomes self-destructive to do that. It is the experience we've developed from *Rock & Rule* and from watching other people's animated movies that it just doesn't work.

"I think that the success of *The Care Bears Movie* is going to help us quite a bit in launching animated films, particularly if we remain as focused on our audience as we were in that movie. There is an animation audience right now and I think it's very young and there are certain characteristics that the property must have in order to be a successful animated movie."

Presently, Nelvana is producing *The Edison Twins* for the CBC and The Disney Channel, a series which is in its third year. They are also working on a sequel to *The Care Bears Movie*.

Just as in the beginning of Nelvana, the company is still interested in producing live-action programming.

"We have four movies in development with different studios, none of them fantasy-oriented projects. We're a pretty diversified company in terms of our interests because we see ourselves as filmmakers," Hersh states. "Along with Stephen J. Cannell Productions, we're developing an exciting property for Saturday morning called *The Midnight Kids*." **CF**

JAMES VAN HISE IS THE EDITOR OF MOVIELAND AND A CONTRIBUTING EDITOR OF COMICS FEATURE.

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